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OWARDS DEMOCRACY

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TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

Part IV

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C. K. OGDEN

WHO SHALL COMMAND THE HEART

Being Part IV of
TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

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WHO SHALL COMMAND
THE HEART

Because the starry lightnings and the life
Of all this Universe which is our Home
Weave round each soul a web of mortal strife,
Hard is its speech to hear and slow to come.

As to one waking from a lonely dream
The friendly taper dwindles to a star,
So to each man men's faces distant seem—
Their dearest words sound faint and very far.

Daily we pass, like shadows in dreamland,
And careless answer in the old curt tone,
Till Death breaks suddenly between us, and
With a great cry we know we have not known.

Ah! surely, to have known and to behold
The beauty that within the soul abides,
For this Earth blossoms and the skies unfold,
For this the Moon makes music in the tides;

For this Man rises from his mould of dust,
Ranges his life and looks upon the Sun,
For this he turns and with adventurous trust
Forsakes this world and seeks a fairer one.

Who shall Command the Heart

WHO shall command the heart, that wondrous Thing,
That wild love-creature, roaming the wilderness,
That none can tame?
Roaming the world, devouring with eyes of flame, eyes of desire,
All forms of heavenly Beauty?

Say, little heart, that beatest pulsest here beneath the ribs,
Who chained thee in this body? — what Titan ages agone?—
Who muzzled thee to drive this crank machine,
Thou wanderer of the woods, thou crimson leopard,
No better than a turnspit?

Nay, but thy 'prenticeship long enough surely thou hast served;
The time has come, and thy full age and strength;
The cage-bars hold no longer, and the body-machine breaks down;
But thou art young and beautiful as ever.

Wild pard who lovest thus to hunt with Man,
I bid thee loose.
Say, wilt thou come with me, and shall we ride,
Companions of the Chase, the universe over?

From Caverns Dark

BEHOLD, a hundred and a thousand lives,
And thousands more, in caverns dark within thee.
No secret wish that flits along thy fancy,
But lo! far back in some ancestral form
It dwelt, had eyes and feet, and ranged its life;
No thought, no dream, but long-dead men and women
Live in the quiet murmur of its wings
Far down, far down, and move about thy brain
And look on the Sun again.

Ah, silence! hearest not the whispering
In darkness, of those countless multitudes?—
That maiden fair who languished out her soul,
Long generations back, and spake no word;
That father whose young daughter to the grave
Bore down his heart with hers; that sturdy soldier
Who hacked and hewed in fervent piety
All who opposed him; that untiring mother
Who wore her life out for her children; aye,
And all the throngs that passed thro' city streets,
Centuries gone, 'neath overhanging gables,
Or toiled on rustic leas—the cleric youth

Who dreamed romance in manuscript and missal,
Gurth herding pigs and whittling bow and arrows
In beechen forests; haughty baron, and serf,
And vain and timid and night-mare-ridden souls,
And trustful, proud, ambitious—all are there!
Hearest the whispering of multitudes?—
All dead—yet all are there.

And ages farther, born of the time before man walked the earth,
Wild forms behold! and roaming spirits of animals,
Hungering, thirsting, loving—beautiful beings
That saw and wondered worshiping each other,
And found their mates and fought their enemies,
And sang and danced and hoarded, skulked and scolded,
In passion's every mood; yet never once
Turned eyes of consciousness upon themselves.
Unwieldy beasts that bellowed through the tree-ferns for their young,
And flying dragons and the roaring lion,
And bats and moths just glimmering thro' the dark
Like faintest memories—aye, all are there!
Hearest the whispering of multitudes?—
All dead—yet all are there.

And in the ages yet to come the same:
A hundred and a thousand lives within thee!
And thousands more—which yet shall walk the Earth.
Dreams, faint desires, scarce conscious of themselves

Shall take swift shape and people the lands with forms
Of thy conceiving, strange similitudes
Even of thyself.
And, hungering thirsting loving, beautiful beings
Sprung from thy heart and brain and sexual part,
Half animal, half angel,
Shall see and wonder worshiping each other;
And find their mates and front their enemies
Onward through long processions of the Suns,
By shores of other continents than now,
In unimagined haunts and cities fair,
To where they fade from view and take at last
Their flight from Earth to homes beyond the Earth.

This mighty Life—past present and to come—
Enfolds thee. This thou art. This thou upgatherest;
And this Thou, tiny creature, pourest forth—
Where now thou standest—
Lord of the world, from caverns dark within thee.

The Lake of Beauty

LET your mind be quiet, realising the beauty of the world, and the immense the boundless treasures that it holds in store.

All that you have within you, all that your heart desires, all that your Nature so specially fits you for—that or the counterpart of it waits embedded in the great Whole, for you. It will surely come to you.

Yet equally surely not one moment before its appointed time will it come. All your crying and fever and reaching out of hands will make no difference.

Therefore do not begin that game at all.

Do not recklessly spill the waters of your mind in this direction and in that, lest you become like a spring lost and dissipated in the desert.

But draw them together into a little compass, and hold them still, so still;

And let them become clear, so clear—so limpid, so mirror-like;

At last the mountains and the sky shall glass themselves in peaceful beauty,

And the antelope shall descend to drink, and to gaze at his reflected image, and the lion to quench his thirst,

And Love himself shall come and bend over, and catch his own likeness in you.

The Wandering Psyche

YOU, who un-united to yourself roam about the world,
Seeking some person or some thing to which to be united—

Seeking to ease that way the pain at your heart—
Deceive not yourself, deceive not others.

For united to that which you really are you are indeed beautiful, united to Yourself you are strong, united to yourself you are already in the hearts of those you love;

But disunited you are none of these things—

And how shall men desire a mere shell, or how will you offer them a husk saying, There is fruit within, when there is no fruit—but only vacancy?

And these are the Gods that seek ever to come in the forms of men—the ageless immortal Gods—to make of earth that Paradise by their presence—

But while you bar the way and weave your own little plans and purposes like a tangle of cobwebs across the inner door,

How shall they make their entrance and habitation with you?

How shall you indeed know what it is to be Yourself?

I HEAR THY CALL, MYSTERIOUS BEING

I HEAR thy call, Mysterious Being;

In the dead of night, when the stars float grey overhead, and the Northern lights flicker faintly,

In the blazing noon when the sunlight rims with a luminous ring the wide horizon,

Flooding, enfolding all—

I hear thy call.

In the hollow depths below—I hear thee, Mysterious Being.

[I am swept out, as the tide to the call of the Moon is swept out from the shores it knows—to wonderful other shores;

I am carried away, away, in a swoon to the ends of Creation.]

Deep, deep is Thy heart. As I sink in it, lo! there is nothing, nothing which is not held by thy love.

On the surface there is rejection and discrimination, but in the depth lo! everything is held by it.

Swift, swift is Thy flight. In an instant now here, now there—it is all the same to Thee.

As the lambent fire of sex within the body, as the Northern lights with luminous fingers over the sky—

So Thou through all creation.

As the great Sun blazing down at noon on the Himálayan forests, and bathing each leaf the same for hundreds, thousands, of miles—

So Thou through all creation.

[Flutter on little leaves—ye that break the light into a million beautiful forms!

Flutter on little worlds, that float in the ether of space!

Flutter on little hearts, whom the great Heart feeds and encloses!]

And thou, O stranger who dwellest perchance in yonder star, or globe that circles dark about yon star,

Or thou, dear lover that on this earth of ours holdest my heart in thine,

Can Death, I say, or Space or Time or Worlds avail in the end against us?

Take me, great Life—O take me, long-delaying,
Unloose these chains, unbind these clogs and fetters;
I hear thy call—so strange—Mysterious Being,
I hear thy call—I come.

So thin a Veil

SO thin a veil divides
Us from such joy, past words.

Walking in daily life—the business of the hour, each detail seen to;

Yet carried, rapt away, on what sweet floods of other Being:

Swift streams of music flowing, light far back through all Creation shining,

Loved faces looking—
Ah! from the true, the mortal self
So thin a veil divides!

The open Secret

SWEET secret of the open air—
That waits so long, and always there, unheeded.

Something uncaught, so free, so calm large confident—
The floating breeze, the far hills and broad sky,
And every little bird and tiny fly or flower
At home in the great whole, nor feeling lost at all or forsaken,

Save man—slight man!

He, Cain-like from the calm eyes of the Angels,
In houses hiding, in huge gas-lighted offices and dens, in ponderous churches,
Beset with darkness, cowers;
And like some hunted criminal torments his brain
For fresh means of escape, continually;
Builds thicker higher walls, ramparts of stone and gold, piles flesh and skins of slaughtered beasts,
'Twixt him and that he fears;
Fevers himself with plans, works harder and harder,
And wanders far and farther from the goal.

And still the great World waits by the door as ever,
The great World stretching endlessly on every hand, in deep on deep of fathomless content—
Where sing the Morning-stars in joy together,
And all things are at home.

The Songs of the Birds, who Hears

THE songs of the birds, who hears? in the high trees calling,
All the long noon high calling?—
In the meadows below them the wind runs over the grass, the shadows lengthen.
Who sees, who hears?—

In the wonderful height of heaven the clouds are flocked like sails,

Slow moving, floating, rounding from deep to deep.

The light swims slowly, changing over the world,

The distant peaks are touched ; and the hills lie silent.

Who sees, who hears ?

The fox-gloves tall out of the earth arise ;

They stand up out of green shadow ;

Out of night, out of seeds dim in the earth arising,

They look forth on the blue and green wilderness, and are changed as it changes—

Changed out of all recognition.

Who sees, who hears ?—

For all things melt and run—if you only watch them long enough !

And you cannot emprison anything in one shape—it will surely give you the slip.

Nothing in essence dies, and nothing in mortal form remains. All is in movement, long calculated, long determined on, with regard to another kind of Form.

The diamond that you wear in your hair, the gold piece you hold so solid in your hand—they are no more solid than a swarm of bees is solid—of which the units are in constant motion to and fro, some leaving and some joining the swarm.

They have other business than yours to attend to—they have other spheres beside the market and the drawing-room—and they will surely give you the slip.

The rocks flow and the mountain shapes flow,
And the forests swim over the lands like cloud-shadows;
The lines of the seeming-everlasting sea are changed,
And its waves beat on unmapped phantom shores:
'Not here, not here!'
All creatures fade from the embraces of their names,
[And you and I, slow, slowly disentangling,]
The delicate hairbells quivering in the light,
The gorse, the heather, and the fox-gloves tall,
The meadows, and the river, rolling, fade:
Fade from their likenesses: fade crying 'Follow!
Follow, for ever follow!'

Who hears, who sees?
Who hears the word of Nature?
The word of her eternal breathing, whispered wherever one shall listen,
The word of the birds in the high trees calling,
Of the wind running over the grass,
The word of the glad prisoners, the tender footless creatures, the plants of the earth,
Rising too, bright-eyed, out of their momentary masks?
'Not here! not here!'

But over all the world, shadowing, shadowing:
The dream! the vast and ever present miracle of all time!
The long-forgotten never-forgotten goal!
Over your own heart, out of its secretest depths:

In crystalline beauty!
Out of all creatures, cloud and mountain and river:
Exhaling, ascending!
From plant and bird and man and planet up-pouring:
Thousand-formed, One,
The ever-present only present reality, source of all illusion,
The Self, the disclosure, the transfiguration of each creature,
And goal of its agelong pilgrimage.

A Child at a Window

I SAT in the dark, at night, outside a little cottage door,
And the light from within streamed through the casement and broke in spray upon the climbing ivy-leaves.
And presently, overhead, a chamber-window opened, and a child peeped silently forth,
And looked up into the vast night and at the all-trembling stars.

And at the same moment, in a far far globe wheeling unseen round a certain star, a child-face peeped forth from its habitation, and looked out into the night, even in the direction of the first child;
And in other globes other faces looked forth;
But they all shrank back and trembled, seeing nothing but vacancy, and saying, How dark, how vast, how awful is the Night!

Yet all the while it was the great Day of the universe into which they looked,
Lit by a million suns.

Night

DARKNESS o'erhead, around,
A curtain closing down upon the earth,
Drowning the woodland tree-tops.
Stretching of hands, straining of eyes—to feel, to see,
To catch the faint faint glamor here and there amid the branches,
The wavering dubious forms and presences.
No floor, no sky, no sound. Only a soft warm moisture in the nostrils,
Folding and brooding all the land in silence.

April

O APRIL, month of Nymphs and Fauns and Cupids,
Month of the Sungod's kisses, Earth's sweet passion,
Of fanciful winds and showers;
Apollo, glorious over hill and dale
Ethereally striding; grasses springing
Rapt to his feet, buds bursting, flowers out-breathing
Their liberated hearts in love to him.

[The little black-cap garrulous on the willow

Perching so prim, the crested chaffinch warbling,
And primrose and celandine, anemone and daisy,
Starring the tender herb which lambs already nibble.]

Month of all-gathering warmth,
Of breathless moments, hotter and hotter growing—
Smiles turned to fire, kisses to fierce earnest—
Of sultry swoons, pauses, and strange suspense
(Clouds and dæmonic thunder through the blue vault threateningly rolling);
Then the delirious up-break—the great fountains of the deep, in Sex,
Loosened to pouring falling rushing waters;
Shafts of wild light; and Sky and Earth in one another's arms
Melted, and all of Heaven spent in streams of love
Towards the Loved one.

Lucifer

SEEST thou me pass—swift with my angels out of heaven propelled—
All stars and lightning in a fluid train?
Seest thou me pass, I say?

His brows, the Lord's, in heaven are glorious;
His eyes give light there, fashioning and beholding rapt all forms divine;
His mighty loins are plunged in night and shadow.

And I—
I am the lightning of the generations through them,
Seed of the worlds to be.

He is the Lord, in moment of creation, fixed everlasting,
The Universe entire—or little flower starred in ecstasy;
And I, orgasmic, fierce, His swift deliverance.

[Seest thou me pass—all stars and lightning in a fluid train?
From heaven down into chaos seest thou me pass, I say?]

The Ocean of Sex

TO hold in continence the great sea, the great ocean of Sex, within one,
With flux and reflux pressing on the bounds of the body, the beloved genitals,
Vibrating, swaying emotional to the star-glint of the eyes of all human beings,
Reflecting Heaven and all Creatures,
How wonderful!

Scarcely a figure, male or female, approaches, but a tremor travels across it.
As when on the cliff which bounds the edge of a pond someone moves, then in the bowels of the water also there is a mirrored movement,
So on the edge of this Ocean.

The glory of the human form, even faintly outlined under the trees or by the shore, convulses it with far reminiscences;

(Yet strong and solid the sea-banks, not lightly to be overpassed;)

Till may-be to the touch, to the approach, to the incantation of the eyes of one,

It burst forth, uncontrollable.

O wonderful Ocean of Sex,

Ocean of millions and millions of tiny seed-like human forms contained (if they be truly contained) within each person,

Mirror of the very universe,

Sacred temple and innermost shrine of each body,

Ocean-river flowing ever on through the great trunk and branches of Humanity,

From which after all the individual only springs like a leaf-bud!

Ocean which we so wonderfully contain (if indeed we do contain thee), and yet who containest us!

Sometimes when I feel and know thee within, and identify myself with thee,

Do I understand that I also am of the dateless brood of Heaven and Eternity.

As the Greeks Dreamed

ON the loose hot sands at foot of the cliffs—
The cloudless blue burning above in furious mid-day heats—
As I bask,
Bathing my brown-tanned body in the warm dry clean grit, or cooling it in the sea;
And the sea creeps up, spacious, in curves along the shore,
With fringes of tawny lacework, and green and blue, deepening into the loveliest violet,
And Aphrodite herself out of this marvellously beautiful robe, this liquid cincture, swiftly gliding, for a moment stands,
(Her feet on the watery plain, her head in the great height against the Sun,)
Vast, glorious, white-armed, visible and invisible;

As the sea stretches miles and miles, and the grey chalk cliffs and capes, fainter and fainter, run forward into it, looking on,
And the fisherman slumbers in the shade of his boat, impervious,
And fainter still and more slumbrous on the horizon, in haze and silence the far ships go by;

Through it all, meseems, I see
How the human body bathed in the sheen and wet, steeped in sun and air,
Moving near and nude among the elements,

Matches somehow and interprets the whole of Nature;

How from shoulder to foot of mountain and man alike the lines of grace run on;

How, as the Greeks dreamed, in rock and rill divinest human forms lie shrined, or in the wild woods lurk embosomed;

And how at length and only in the loving union and uncoveredness of Man with Nature may either know or understand the other.

In a Scotch-Fir Wood

IN a Scotch-fir wood—

Where the great rays of the low sun glanced through the trees, in open beauty under the shaggy green,

Lighting stem behind stem in lofty strength interminable;

And the wild sweet air ran lightly by, with warm scent of pine-needles—

I heard a voice saying:

O Man, when wilt thou come fit comrade of such trees, fair mate and crown of such a scene?

Poor pigmy, botched in clothes, feet coffined in boots, braced, stitched and starched,

Too feeble, alas! too mean, undignified, to be endured—

Go hence, and in the centuries come again!

The Dream goes by

THE dream goes by, touches men's hearts, and floats and fades again—

Far on the hills away from this nightmare of modern cheap-jack life:

The finished free Society.

Finished and done with so much that clogs to-day the weary spirit, weary body;

Finished and done with all the old cumbersome apparatus of Law and Authority, with the endless meanness of 'business' and money-making, with the silly paraphernalia of distinction and respectability, with the terrible struggle of each against all, and the trampling of the weak underfoot by the strong;

Done with the endless joyless labors for the bread that perisheth, for clothing which keeps not the heart warm, for possessions which only weigh their owners to the ground;

With envies, greeds, jealousies—loads and burdens of life too great to be borne—Sisyphus toils that bring no nearer to the goal.

The grown man hand in hand with his little girl, walking the woodland path,

With brown uncovered bodies, both of them, so glad, content, unconscious;

And all the wealth and beauty of the world is theirs;

The Sun shining on their limbs; and in their minds the long results of human culture.

The simple dresses of the public thoroughfare, used or not used with quiet sense of fitness;

The simple diet so easily won, so gladly shared;

The stores of human science, human knowledge, accessible to all—for all to use.

And Death no longer terrible, but full
Of poignant strange Expansion; Labor too
(Which is our daily death
And resurrection in the thing created)
An ever-abiding joy.—

A life so near to Nature, all at one with bird and plant and beast and swimming thing,

So near to all its fellows in sweet love—
In joy unbounded and undying love.

The dream goes by, touches and stirs men's hearts,
And floats, and waits, again.

Surely the Time will come

SURELY the time will come when humanity will refuse to be diseased any longer.

This list of filthy and hideous complaints,—too filthy to be calmly spoken of—these small-poxes, typhoids, choleras, cancers, tumors, tubercles,—dropsy, diabetes, uræmia—all preventible, and easy enough to prevent;

And yet—incredible though it seems—men and women still tolerating and condoning them;

Men and women who pride themselves on their culture,

refinement, punctiliousness of nose, and so forth—and who would turn up the latter at the sight of a pig and a few fowls in an Irishman's cabin—actually tolerating in their own persons the perpetual presence of the most disgusting organisms;

And other men and women, through sheer ignorance, believing such a state of affairs to be necessary.

Surely the time will come when to be diseased, to spread disease around one, or transmit it to descendants,

To live willingly in the conditions that produce disease, or not strenuously to fight against such conditions,

Will be looked on as a crime—both of the individual and of society.

For since a little self-control, since a clean and elementary diet, pure water, openness of the body to sun and air, a share of honest work, and some degree of mental peace and largesse, are the perfectly simple conditions of health, and are, or ought to be, accessible to everybody—

To neglect these is sheer treason;

While to surrender them out of fear (should one stick to them) of being robbed of other things far less precious, is to be a fool, as well as a coward.

Surely the time will come when people, seeing how obvious and simple is the problem of human life,

Will refuse (even at the bidding of the Parson, the Policeman, Mrs. Grundy, and the commercial Slave-drivers and Tax-collectors) to live the lives of idiots;

Will refuse to do other work than that which they like, and which they feel to be really needed;

Will cease to believe that their own well-being can only

be maintained at the cost of the Fear, Torment, and Slaughter of the animals, and the Hanging and Imprisonment of men;

And will waste the hours no more in elaborately preparing food which, when prepared, does but rot the vitals of those who consume it, and in schemes of money-making and 'business' which but destroy their souls.

The time will come surely when we shall cease to burden our limbs and becloud our skins with garments, the major part of which are useless, unless as a breeding ground of ill-health, deformity, and indecency;

Shall cease to build walls and fortifications of property and possession each round ourselves as against the others —deliberately confining so and crucifying the great god of love within us—

And shall at last liberate our minds and bodies from that funny old lazar-house of the centuries, of which none but ourselves, after all, are the warders and gaolers.

The One Foundation

ONLY that people can thrive that loves its land and swears to make it beautiful;

For the land (the Demos) is the foundation-element of human life, and if the public relation to that is false, all else is of need false and inverted.

How can a flower deny its own roots, or a tree the soil from which it springs?

And how can a people stand firmly planted under the sun, except as mediators between Earth and Heaven—

To dedicate the gracious fruits of the ground to all divine uses?

Think of it—

To grow rich and beautiful crops for human food, and flowers and fruits to rejoice the eye and heart,

What a privilege!

Yet this to-day is a burden and a degradation, thrust upon the poor and despised.

The Scotch farm-lad strides across the ploughed leas, scattering with princely hand the bread of thousands;

The Italian peasant ties his vines to the trellised canes with twigs of broom, and the spring sunlight glances and twinkles on him from the cistern just below;

The Danish boy drives the herds home from the low-lying pasture-lands in the sweet clear air of evening;

And the world which is built upon the labor of these disowns them, and they themselves sink earthward worn out with unheeded toil;

While the Politician and the Merchant who flourish on lies and fill the people's ears and mouths with chaff are publicly seated in the highest places.

And the Earth rolls on, with all her burden of love unheeded,

And sadness falls on the peoples divorced from the breasts that fain would suckle them.

Think of it—

To place a nation squarely on its own base, spreading out its people far and wide in honored usefulness upon the soil,

Building up all uses and capacities of the land into the life of the masses,

So that the riches of the Earth may go first and foremost to those who produce them, and so onward into the whole structure of society;

To render the life of the people clean and gracious, vital from base to summit, and self-determining,

Dependent simply on itself and not on cliques and coteries of speculators anywhere; and springing thus inevitably up into wild free forms of love and fellowship;

To make the wild places of the lands sacred, keeping the streams pure, and planting fresh blooms along their edges; to preserve the air crystalline and without taint—tempting the sun to shine where before was gloom;

To adorn the woodlands and the high tops with new trees and shrubs and winged and footed things,

Sparing all living creatures as far as possible rather than destroying them;

What a pleasure!

To do all this in singleness of heart were indeed to open up riches for mankind of which few dream—

So much, so infinitely more than what is now called Wealth.

But to-day the lands are slimed and fenced over with denials; and those who would cannot get to them, and those who own have no joy in them—except such joy as a dog may have in a fodderam.

And so, even to-day, while riches untold are wrung from the Earth, it is rather as a robbery that they are produced—without gladness or gratitude, but in grief and sadness and lying and greed and despair and unbelief.

Say, say, what would those riches be, if the Earth and her love were free?

But all waits. And the thunderclouds brood in silence over the lands, meditating the unlipped words of destiny; and the sky rains light upon the myriad leaves and grass, searching inevitably into every minutest thing;

And Ignorance breeds Fear, and Fear breeds Greed, and Greed that Wealth whose converse is Poverty—and these again breed Strife and Fear in endless circles;

But Experience (which in time to all must come) breeds Sympathy, and Sympathy Understanding, and Understanding Love;

And Love leads Helpfulness by the hand, to open the gates of Power unlimited—even for that new race which now appears.

And the blue sea waits below the girdle of the sun-fringed shores, and lips and laps through the millenniums, syllabling the unformed words which man alone can pronounce entire;

And the sunlight wraps the globe of the Earth, and dances and twinkles in the ether of the human heart,

Which is indeed a great and boundless ocean, in which all things float suspended.

A Mightier than Mammon

AT last, after centuries, when the tension and strain of the old society can go no further, and ruin on every side seems impending,

Behold! behind and beneath it all, in dim prefigurement, yet clear and not to be mistaken—the Outline and Draft of a new order.

When Machinery has made affluence possible for everybody, and yet the scramble for Wealth is keener than ever, the line between rich and poor as sharp;

When locomotion and intercommunication practically make the whole World one, and yet the Nations stand round armed tooth and claw, and glaring at each other;

When it is recognised that culture and manual labor are not only compatible but necessary in combination with each other, and yet society remains divided into brutalised workers and cultivated nincompoops;

When men and women everywhere are hungering for community of life, to pass freely, to love and be loved; and yet they remain frozen up, starched, starved, coffined, each in their own little cells of propriety, respectability, dirty property, and dismal poverty;

When the cells are alive and in pain, because the body is lifeless;

When thousands of pulpits preach religion, and there is not a word of religion in it;

When the great web and framework of the old order, Law, is collapsing with its own weight—myriads and myriads of statutes, overlapping, overlying, precedents, principles, instances, tumbled buried one behind another in inextricable confusion—and yet never before in the history of the world was there such a rigid brute-pharisaical apparatus of police, military and prisons to enforce the 'heads or tails' of the Courts, and the cant of the 'superior' classes;

When the Millionaire appears on the scene—a new type of human being—as the Dinosaur may have appeared ages ago upon the Earth, gigantic, lumbering, fateful and dangerous; yet destined perhaps finally to break down the ancient jungle of 'Government,' and the barriers of the old Nationalities; and to be a link in the evolution of the future;

When Art is divorced from Life, Science from human feeling, Marriage from Love, Education from Affection;

When to work freely at one's own chosen trade and to interchange freely the products with others is what almost everybody really desires—and is obviously the indicated social form of the future; and yet when nearly everyone is a wage-slave or works at work which he detests!

When the longing for the life of Nature, for the Air and the Sun, for the freedom of the Earth and the waters, for liberation, wildness, spontaneity, is upon folk as perhaps it never was before; and yet they are mewed up more than ever in houses, clothes, 'business,' and general asphyxia and futility.

When similarly the longing for freedom of Sex is upon

people, for purity of love, unashamed, unshackled, creating its own law—and yet love is everywhere shamed and shackled and impure;

When the Electric Tension in every direction, owing to this separation of polarities, is becoming so great that the luminous spark, the lightning, the vital flash, has become inevitable;

Then at last, not to be mistaken, the outline and draft of the new creature appears—

The soul that soon shall knit the growing limbs glides in.

A new conception of Life—yet ancient as creation (since indeed, properly speaking, there is no other)—

The life of the Heart, the life of friendship and attachment:

Society forming freely everywhere round this—knit together by this, rather than by the old Cash-nexus:

The love and pride of race, of clan, of family, the free sacrifice of life for these, the commemoration of these in grand works and deeds;

The dedication of Humanity, the wider embrace that passes all barriers of class and race;

And the innumerable personal affection in all its forms—

These, and a proud beautiful sane utterance and enduring expression of them, first; and the other things to follow.

The love of men for each other—so tender, heroic, constant;

That has come all down the ages, in every clime, in every nation,

Always so true, so well assured of itself, overleaping barriers of age, of rank, of distance,

Flag of the camp of Freedom;

The love of women for each other—so rapt, intense, so confiding-close, so burning-passionate,

To unheard deeds of sacrifice, of daring and devotion, prompting;

And (not less) the love of men for women, and of women for men—on a newer greater scale than it has hitherto been conceived;

Grand, free and equal—gracious yet ever incommensurable—

The soul of Comradeship glides in.

The young heir goes to inspect the works of one of his tenants;

[Once more the king's son loves the shepherd lad;]

In the shed the fireman is shovelling coal into the boiler-furnace. He is neither specially handsome nor specially intelligent, yet when he turns, from under his dark lids rimmed with coal-dust shoots something so human, so loving-near, it makes the other tremble.

They only speak a few words, and lo! underneath all the differences of class and speech, of muscle and manhood, their souls are knit together.

The Cinghalese cooly comes on board a merchant vessel at Colombo, every day for a week or more, to do some bits of cleaning.

He is a sweet-natured bright intelligent fellow of 21 or so. One of the engineers is decently kind and friendly with him—gives him a knife and one or two little presents;

But the Cinghalese gives his very soul to the engineer; and worships his white jacket and overalls as though they were the shining garment of a god.

He cannot rest; but implores to be taken on the voyage; and weeps bitterly when he learns that the ship must sail without him.

[Ah! weep not, brown-bodied youth wandering lonely by the surf-ridden shore—as you watch your white friend's vessel gliding into the offing, under the sun and the sun-fringed clouds;

Out, far out to sea, with your friend whom you will never see again;

Weep not so heart-brokenly, for even your tears, gentle boy, poured now upon the barren sand are the prophecy of amity that shall be one day between all the races of the earth.]

And here are two women, both doctors and mature in their profession, whose souls are knit in a curiously deep affection.

They share a practice in a large town, and live in the same house together, exchanging all that they command, of life and affection and experience;

And this continues for twenty years—till the death of the elder one—after which the other ceases not to visit her grave, twice every week, till the time of her own last illness.

And this is of a poor lad born in the slums, who with aching lonely heart once walked the streets of London.

Many spoke to him because he was fair—asked him to come and have a drink, and so forth; but still it was no satisfaction to him; for they did not give him that which he needed.

Then one day he saw a face in which love dwelt. It was a man twice his own age, captain of a sailing vessel—a large free man, well acquainted with the world, capable and kindly.

And the moment the lad saw him his heart was given to him, and he could not rest but must needs follow the man up and down—yet daring not to speak to him, and the other knowing nothing of it all.

And this continued—till the time came for the man to go another voyage. Then he disappeared; and the youth, still not knowing who or whence he was, fell into worse misery and loneliness than ever, for a whole year.

Till at last one day—or one evening rather—to his great joy he saw his friend going into a public house. It was in a little street off Mile-end Road. He slipped in and sat beside him.

And the man spoke to him, and was kind, but nothing more. And presently, as the hour was getting late, got up and said Goodnight, and went out at the door.

And the lad, suddenly seized with a panic fear that he might never see his friend again, hurried after him, and when they came to a quiet spot, ran up and seized him by the

hand, and hardly knowing what he was doing fell on his knees on the pavement, and held him.

And the man at first thought this was a ruse or a mere conspiracy, but when he lifted the lad and looked in his face he understood, for he saw love written there. And he straightway loved and received him.

And this is of a boy who sat in school.

The masters talked about Greek accidence and quadratic equations, and the boys talked about lobs and byes and bases and goals; but of that which was nearest to his heart no one said a word.

It was laughed at—or left unspoken.

Yet when the boy stood near some of his comrades in the cricket-field or sat next them in school, he stocked and stammered, because of some winged glorious thing which stood or sat between him and them.

And again the laughter came, because he had forgotten what he was doing; and he shrank into himself, and the walls round him grew, so that he was pent and lonely like a prisoner.

Till one day to him weeping, Love full-grown, all-glorious, pure, unashamed, unshackled, came like a god into his little cell, and swore to break the barriers.

And when the boy through his tears asked him how he would do that, Love answered not, but turning drew with his finger on the walls of the cell.

And as he drew, lo! beneath his finger sprang all forms of beauty, an endless host—outlines and colors of all that is, transfigured;

And, as he drew, the cell-walls widened—a new world rose—and folk came trooping in to gaze,

And the barriers had vanished.

Wonderful, beautiful, the Soul that knits the Body's life passed in,

And the barriers had vanished.

Everywhere under the surface the streamers shoot, auroral,

Strands and tissues of a new life forming.

Already the monstrous accumulations of private wealth seem useless and a burden—

At best to be absorbed in new formations.

The young woman from an upper class of society builds up her girls' club; the young man organises his boys from the slums. Untiring is their care; but something more, more personal and close, than philanthropy inspires them.

The little guilds of workers are animated by a new spirit; to have pleasure in good work seems something worth living for; the home-colonists turn their backs on civilisation if only they may realise a friendly life with Nature and each other; the girls in the dress-making shop stand in a new relation to their mistress, and work so gladly for her and with her; the employer of labor begins to doubt whether he gets any satisfaction by grinding the faces of his men—a new idea is germinating in his mind; even to the landlord it occurs that to create a glad and free village life upon his estate would be more pleasure than to shoot over it.

As to the millionaire, having spent his life in scheming for Wealth, he cannot but continue in the web which himself has woven; yet is heartily sick of it, and longs in a kind of vague way for something simple and unembarrassed. He is pestered to death by sharks, parasites, poor relations, politicians, adventurers, lawyers, company-promoters, begging letters and business correspondence, society functions, charitable and philanthropic schemes, town and country houses, stewards, bailiffs, flunkeys, and the care of endless possessions; and sees that to cast all these aside and devote his wealth if possible to the realisation of a grand life for the mass-peoples of the Earth were indeed his best hope and happiness.

The graduate from Cambridge is a warm-hearted impulsive little woman, genuine and human to the core. Having escaped from high and dry home-circles, she found curiously the answer of her heart in a wage-worker of an East London workshop—a calm broad-browed woman, strong, clearheaded, somewhat sad in expression, and a bit of a leader among her trade-mates.

Having got into touch with each other, the two came at last to live together; and immediately on doing so found themselves a focus and centre of activities—like opposite poles of a battery through which when in contact the electricity streams.

So the news and interests of the two classes of society streamed through them. Through them too, folk from either side, especially women, came into touch with each other, and discovered a common cause and sympathy amid many surface differences.

Thus by a thousand needs beside their own compelled, was their love assured, their little home made sacred.

Everywhere a new motive of life dawns.

With the liberation of Love, and with it of Sex, with the sense that these are things—and the joy of them—not to be dreaded or barred, but to be made use of, wisely and freely, as a man makes use of his most honored possession,

Comes a new gladness:

The liberation of a Motive greater than Money,

And the only motive perhaps that can finally take precedence of Money.

Men and women mate freely again;

The sacredness of sex in freedom is taught in schools and churches; the ulcer of prostitution slowly disappears; the wasted love that flows in a morbid stream through the streets, or desiccates in grand mansions, runs once more into the channels of free devotion and life.

One by one, here and there, in silence perhaps, unremarked, or perhaps the centre of a little cyclone of excited abuse, a couple, offstanding, exempt, determined, assert their right to the highest and best that life can give.

[Fear not, gentle girl, the sneers of the womenkind, nor thou, young man, the pointed fingers of who can credit not the truth of love.]

To lead their own lives, irrespective of all criticism and custom, and graft into the great Heart of the world and each other.

Wild as a raven, and a free lover of Nature, is the Irish squire's daughter. She hates all the conventions and proprieties with an instinctive hatred—she hardly knows why. She is loved by a man whom the family consider beneath them. He is not without his faults certainly. But when her parents turn fiercely on her and him, she determines at all costs to stick to him. Her sister, the dove, approved and admired by everybody, marries a young Earl just come into the title; and she on the same day goes off with her friend, and is forbidden to cross, and in fact never crosses, the threshold of her home again.

The newly-made wife, wedded to an army officer, finds almost immediately after marriage that their temperaments are wholly incompatible. Instead of sacrificing herself to 'duty' or propriety, she has the good sense to insist on leaving him: on leaving him his freedom, and herself the same, as far as may be, for the future.

And this is of a young man, a man about town and the clubs, and well up in the finesse of society, but of real affectionate nature—who was truly bored with his own pursuits and surroundings, and so for him too the barriers vanished.

He fell in with a girl of quite rustic birth and life, but bright-looking, and of sturdy almost stubborn common-sense and wit; and was charmed—partly by her contrast to all that he was accustomed to.

Ultimately—and after some obstinate and exasperating refusals on her part—he made her his wife; much to the

disgust of his relatives—whose only consolation was to find he did not intend to bring her among them!

She in fact felt (and he knew) that she could not cope with 'society' ways and customs, and her true instinct was to spare herself the vulgarity.

They took a little house near London, and lived quietly and happily, allowing any of their friends, who had good sense enough, to come and see them—she meanwhile learning much about the great world, and he learning much which he had never known before about practical work and the needs of the people.

Then, later on, when he came into his estate, and they went down into the country, instead of living in the ancestral wigwam they agreed it better to build a decent-sized cottage in the grounds for their own use;

And the Hall and outbuildings they fitted up as Workshops; and gradually getting the village lads and girls together found them employment at various small trades and crafts;

Till with the output of good and artistic work, their market became assured, and the affair grew rapidly in extent and solidity.

And the larger rooms they adorned in every way for library and reading purposes, and music and entertainments of all kinds; and the grounds were partly for recreation and partly for the cultivation of produce;

So that before long the place became much known and sought after, and the employees (who all had a share in the concern) were mighty proud of it.

Certainly the old county society felt somewhat shocked and uncomfortable, and even the tenant-farmers thought things were being carried too far;

But the young couple stuck to their programme, and as years went on, and after various obstacles and opposition lived down, their lives became the centre of the love and affection of the whole neighborhood, great and small, but especially the small;

And they achieved a real distinction, and the finest kind of aristocracy.

O little sister Heart, without thy big brother the rude Brain what wouldst thou do?

So I see thee sitting in thy solitary chamber, poring over a figure in a cameo—

So yearning lost desirous, faint forgetful,

Failing almost thy daily service of the body.

Then comes thy brother and snatches thee by the hand, saying, "Come out here into the world:

See all these wonderful things, and all there is to do;"

And talks so eloquent, so persuasively,

Soon thou art busy with him and his affairs, and the great world outside there in the sun;

Till presently he rests or sleeps awhile—and thou returning

Gazest again on the cameo in thy chamber.

Forms Eternal as the Mountains

SO, when for an instant my friends (and I myself) appeared like insubstantial forms whirled to and fro in the world, now jostled against each other, now carried apart —the sport of the winds and the waves, and puppets moved by the tangled threads of chance:

All at once the heavens opened, and I beheld, magnificent, serene—

Like mountains in the morning towering over the earth, changeless, or changing only as the mountains change,

[And Time and all the years were but a mist which rolled against them,

Hiding, revealing, here an outline, there an outline,

Here a ledge of blooming flowers, there a black and lowering crag]—

That other world where the Sun shines for ever,

Those other Forms that move not from their place.

Spending the Night Alone

TO lie all night beside the loved one—how lovely!

To hold in one's arms something so precious, so beautiful,

Dear head and hair and lips and limbs that shrine eternity,

Through scent and sense and breath and touch and love—

Forgetting all but this one—all but this one.

And then again to spend the night alone, to resume oneself—

To sail out in the silent watches over the sleeping world, and drink of the intoxication of space,

Calm, self-centred, to the great first One united;

Over-looking the wide sleeping-grounds of Time—forms of the past, the future—comrades innumerable,

Lovers possible, all safely eternally embosomed;

Kissing them lightly on the lips, the forehead,

Leaving them sleeping,

Spending the night alone.

O Joy Divine of Friends

O JOY divine of friends!
To hold within the circle of one's arms
More than the universe holds:
So sweet, so rare, so precious beyond words,
The god so tenderly mortal!

Not kisses only or embraces,
Nor the sweet pain and passion of the flesh alone;
But more, far more,
To feel (ah joy!) the creature deep within
Touch on its mate, unite, and lie entranced
There, ages down, and ages long, in light,
Suffused, divine—where all these other pleasures
Fade but to symbols of that perfect union!

O Child of Uranus

O CHILD of Uranus, wanderer down all times,
Darkling, from farthest ages of the Earth the same
Strange tender figure, full of grace and pity,
Yet outcast and misunderstood of men—

Thy Woman-soul within a Man's form dwelling,
[Was Adam perchance like this, ere Eve from his side was drawn?]
So gentle, gracious, dignified, complete,
With man's strength to perform, and pride to suffer without sign,
And feminine sensitiveness to the last fibre of being;
Strange twice-born, having entrance to both worlds—
Loved, loved by either sex,
And free of all their lore!

I see thee where down all of Time thou comest;
And women break their alabaster caskets, kiss and anoint thy feet, and bless the womb that bare thee,
While in thy bosom with thee, lip to lip,
Thy younger comrade lies.

Lord of the love which rules this changing world,
Passing all partial loves, this one complete—the Mother-love and sex-emotion blended—
I see thee where for centuries thou hast walked,
Lonely, the world of men,

Saving, redeeming, drawing all to thee,
Yet outcast, slandered, pointed of the mob,
Misjudged and crucified.

Dear Son of heaven—long suffering wanderer through the wildernesses of civilisation—
The day draws nigh when from these mists of ages
Thy form in glory clad shall reappear.

One at a Time

A MILLION faces, loves, bodies, lives—a million souls,
Pouring down Time—
As in a dream I see, and know my own.
All nations, classes, trades, ranks, temperaments,
[The soldier's cap, the felon's crop, the bishop's mitre,
Under the eyelids of the peasant woman, beneath the burnous of the Arab chieftain,]
A million souls, yet from the rest at once distinguished—by the first glance revealed—
I see, and know my own.

[Nay through the ages, loved ones, true to you,
Inseparable at heart I still remain,
Nor doubt you for an instant, nor myself.]

But here, to-day, may-be of all One only
The hour, the strict Eternity of Time,
Presents—and I accept.

May-be the least, unworthiest as the world would say,
Yet even so sufficient—for blest the hour
Which brings what, else, Eternity would miss!
Another day the worthiest may claim me;
To-day we two alone will be the world:
And Love, the Lord of all, shall dwell between us.

The Dead Comrade

THERE among the woods, after the battle returning,
In a little open spot—how well I remember it—
Where the ground was red with the blood of my lover, my dead comrade,
[Him whom to save I would have died so gladly, O so gladly,
Whom I could not at any time bear to see suffer even a little hurt,
So tenderly we loved, so tenderly,]
There on the stained red ground, in the midst of the clotted precious blood, not even yet dry, stood a small yellow flower—
The little Cow-wheat they call it, with its slender yellow blossoms in pairs, and its faint-tinged lips.

And now in the woods each year—in the silent beautiful woods, so calm, so sweet—though the same flowers spring by hundreds—
Not a word do they utter of that awful scene, not a word of all that carnage,

Of the splintered trees, the blood-smeared corpses, the devilish noises and the sights and smells,

Or of the livid face and faint-blue lips of him I loved as never another I could love.

O how can you grow so careless, little flowers, and yet continue ages to grow under the trees the same—

And all the light gone out of the world for me?

Each year when summer comes and July suns,

To the woods I must go like one drawn by a fatal dread and fascination,

To see the sight I most abhor to see—

The patch of blood, and the unharmed flower in the midst,

And faint in death the lips I love so well.

Philoläus to Diocles

HOW often at dusk, dear friend, when thou art absent,
Sitting alone I wonder of what thou doest,
And dream, and wait of thee.

All the sweet noons and moons we have spent together;

All the glad interchange of laughter and love,

And thoughts, so grave, or fanciful:

What can compare with these, or what surpass them?

All the unbroken faith and steadfast reliance—nigh twenty years twining the roots of life far down;

And not a mistrustful hour between us—or moment of anger:

What can surpass all this, or what compare?
Could riches or fame?
Or if the Thebans honor me for their law-giver,
Or thou, Diocles, in Olympic fields art victor beloved and crowned,
What are these things to that?

And still thou growest upon me, as a mountain,
Seen from another mountain-summit, rises
Clearer, more grand, more beautiful than ever;
And still within thine eyes, and ever plainer,
I see my own soul sleeping.

Say, did not Love, the Olympian blacksmith, find us,
Æons ago, in heaven,
And weld our souls together before all worlds?

II.

When thou art far, and the days go by without thee,
Strangely I suffer.
Perhaps even so in winter suffer the plants and the trees, when the Sun withdraws his life-ray;
Thin runs the blood in my limbs, sucked out of the arteries;
The heart shrinks closed and painful—I lose command and vigor;
At times like these, methinks, I too have strayed from my body,
Afar, in pursuit of thee, my sun and my savior.

III.

Thou art so beautiful to me, sweet friend,
Years bring no shadow between us;
Always I praise the very ground beneath thy feet,
That leads thee toward me,
And give my unbelieving hands free leave to hold thee,
For still to assure myself that thou art there
Is my first need.

Love, that entwined our souls before all worlds,
Binds the great orbs of heaven too in their courses,
But by no bond more lasting.

IV.

And sweeter far to suffer is it, dear one, being sometimes absent,
Than (if indeed 'twere possible) to feel the opposite pain
Of too much nearness, and love dying so
Down to mere slackness.

Now, as it is, the harp is firmly strung;
A tender tension animates the strings;
And every thought of Thee, and all the winds which blow along the world,
Wake a sweet áccord underneath the din,
And harmonize life's wilderness for me.

V.

Therefore I say, stay, comrade, lover mine,
Nor wander far from me while life remains,
But let us rather, and if it may be, hand in hand,
Pass to that last strange change, therein perhaps to know each other
Nearer even than now.

VI.

Indeed, thou art so deep within my heart,
I fear not Death. And though I die, and fail,
Falling through stupors, senselessness, oblivion,
Down to the roots of being; still, thou art there.
I shall but sleep as I have slept before,
So oft, in dreamless peace, close-linked with thee.

Hafiz to the Cup-bearer

DEAR Son, that out of the crowded footways of Shiráz,
With hesitant step emerging,
Camest and laid thy life down at my feet,
Faint and ashamed, like one by some divine wine vanquished:

I take thy gift, so gracious and sparkling-clear,
Thy naïve offering, as of a simple Nature-child,
Wondering, like one who sees a rose in winter blooming, or cypress 'mid a wilderness of rocks;

Or finds among the marl and clay beneath his feet
A ruby fair embedded—and stops and takes it.

[The Earth, so dead and gross, and yet to points of finest light
Still working in the silence of her unseen chambers!
And thou, great common People, slavish still and brute and ignorant, in alley and tavern,
Yet in thy rugged mass fair hearts of finest glow
Infallibly condensing!]

Come, son (since thou hast said it), out of all Shiráz
Háfiz salutes thee comrade. Let us go
A spell of life along the road together.

In the Stone-floored Workshop

THERE in the stone-floored workshop in the middle of a great dirty city—the windows half made up with dust—
Three men, astraddle on their horsings, and over their grinding wheels bending.

The drum that brings the power from the engine-room pounds and thumps, the belting slaps and crackles, whizz go the wheels so steady in their sockets, and the streams of sparks fly rustling.

All is so old-fashioned, perhaps much as it was four or five centuries ago;

The old stone trows, half full of water, in which the wheels run; the puddles, the mud, the wheelswarf spattered and crusting the walls and even the clothes of the grinders with yellow dirt;

The rude wooden bearings for the axles, soused with water when they get too hot; the drawing-up stones, emery wheels, polishers, glazers;

The little wheels, made out of fragments of larger ones, for hollow grinding, and (more modern) the fan for drawing and expelling the dust.

There astraddle, in their rough clothes, with clogs on their feet, and faces yellow-splashed, hour by hour bending over, the men sit—

With careful grasp of one hand and pressure of the other, holding the blades to the stone—the pads of their finger-tips worn through to the very quick where they now and then and unavoidably touch it in its swift career.

Very careful and responsible is the work—the least slip may cause an accident.

A man comes in from the hardening shop, puts down a bundle of rough-shaped blades, and goes out again.

And still the heads sway rhythmically from side to side as eye and hand follow their work across the wheel.

Very careful is the testing and examining of a new stone and the fitting it on its axle: a single flaw and in the great speed it will fly, bringing danger to all around it.

Now and then one pauses and takes a swipe out of a can;

or throws his band off, to change his wheel for another ; or goes to the fire to examine some blades which are heating in a tray over it.

Curt is the talk (of fancy-backs, rattlers, sours and wasters, tangs and heels and shoulders), for the noise is too great, and the strain, for much beyond monosyllables.

Dingy the den and dense the grit that settles thick upon everything.

Yet at last out of it all, out of this primitive scene, emerges something so finished, so subtly perfect—

A razor, keen and brilliant, a very focus of light in the whole shop, with swift invisible edge running true from heel to point, and ringing so clear to the twang of the thumb-nail on it—

Emerges (his work done) a figure with dusty cap and light curls escaping from under it, large dove-grey eyes and Dutch-featured face of tears and laughter,

(So subtle, so rare, so finished a product,)

A man who understands and accepts all human life and character,

Keen and swift of brain, heart tender and true, and low voice ringing so clear,

And my dear comrade.

The Trysting

FAR over the hills, ten miles, in the cloudless summer morning,

By grassy slopes and flowering wheatfields, and over the brooks, he strides—

A young man, slender, wistful-eyed—with a great bouquet of flowers in his hand.

Great roses, red and white (in the cottage-home garden gathered),

And sweet-scented ladslove and rich marigolds and mignonette and lilies,

All trembling in the glimmer of brimming eyes, and steeped in fragrant memories,

With full full heart he carries,

And calls in spirit, the while he goes, to her so loved—

More than all other women on earth beloved—

His mother who bore him.

Till at length by the town arriving,

On her grave in the cemetery ground he faithfully lays them.

And this the trysting.

This the trysting for which in the little garden, with tears, he gathered the flowers,

For which o'er the hills he hastened.—

And this, what means, what boots it?

There truly, below, with head fallen on one side, a shapeless indistinguishable mass, her body lies—

Three years already from this life departed—

Nor hears nor sees, nor understands at all,

Senseless as any clod.
Above, the flowers he has brought lie wilting in the sun ;
Around, the common-place dingy scene extends—the dreary cemetery,
The stones, the walls, the houses.—
What boots it all ?
These senseless things that neither see nor hear,
To senseless things what message can they bear ?

Yet he, he hears and sees.
A natural child, untaught, reckless of custom and what they call religion,
He hears and sees things hidden from the learnéd ;
He glimpses forms beyond the walls of Time.
Of bibles, creeds and churches he knows nothing,
And all that science has said about life and death and atom-dances and the immutable laws of matter,
And all the impassable lines and barriers that the professors and specialists have built up out of their own imaginations—
These simply exist not, for him.
He only knows she comes, the loved and worshiped—
Comes, takes the flowers,
Stands like a thin mist in the sun beside him,
Looks in his eyes, and touches him again.

And to its depth his heart shakes, breaking backward,
Tears rise once more, earth reels, the sun is splintered,
Stones, houses, and the solid sky dissolve,

And that far marvelous vibration of the soul,
Swifter than light, more powerful than sound,
Flies through the world, pierces the rocks and tombs,
And gains her Presence at the feet of God.

The Lover far on the Hills

HERE on this high top far above the world—
This mute and glorious scene, earth's panorama:
[The swelling mountains, all in green and gold,
Round-topped, or broken into savage crags;
The valleys scarcely shown, like narrow rifts;
The slate-dark shadows, and the tarns and lakes,
And vistas over them to sunny lands
Of tiny patchwork, with quaint fields and farms,
White sails on waters, and the sun-splashed sea:]
Here on this high top dreaming, to it all
I find but one fit likeness—
Namely the gracious form of her I love.
The limbs and hair, the lips, the eyes, I love—
Twin heavenlit lakes—
And undulant lines that run from hips to shoulder;
Fair world of hollow and rondure, hill and plain,—
So solid-fair like this, so dewy-fragrant,
And all inwrought with that dear life that holds me.

How calm this air! this silence here in heaven!
Calm blue, and tender hanging clouds delaying
To kiss their shadows on the hills' deep breasts;

And far around this dream of human presence—
Nature, and my sweet Helpmate whom I worship,
With the dear god that dwells behind them both.

The Babe

THE trio perfect: the man, the woman, and the babe:
And herein all Creation.

The two, with wonder in their eyes, from opposite worlds
Of sex, of ancestry, pursuits, traditions,
Each other suddenly, amazed, confronting—
A nameless glory each in each surmising.

A frenzy as of Gods—
Imperial rage, flinging the goods of the world aside as dross, to reach to a priceless treasure:
[He madly invasive,
She deeply wise, and drawing farther back
Even to the gates of Paradise as he approaches:]
Strange ecstasy of warfare!
Seisin and ravishment of souls and bodies,
Veils rent asunder,
Heaven opening measureless, overhead, in splendor,
And all life changed, transfigured!

And then a calm.
Weeks of humdrum and mortal commonplace,
And months perchance in monotone of toil,

But still behind it all some deep remembrance,
Some sure reliance,
And sweet and secret knowledge in each other.

And then the Babe:
A tiny perfect sea-shell on the shore
By the waves gently laid (the awful waves!)—
By trembling hands received—a folded message—
A babe yet slumbering, with a ripple on its face
Remindful of the ocean.

And two twined forms that overbend it, smiling,
And wonder to what land Love must have journeyed,
Who brought this back—this word of sweetest meaning:
Two lives made one, and visible as one.

And herein all Creation.

O gracious Mother, in thy vast eternal sunlight
Heal us, thy foolish children, from our sins;
Who heed thee not, but careless of thy Presence
Turn our bent backs on thee, and scratch and scrabble
In ash-heaps for salvation.

I Saw a Fair House

I SAW a fair house standing in a garden, but no one moved about it;

And I said to some who stood by, Who is the owner or dweller here?

And they said, We know not. Sometimes we see a form at a window, but it is for a moment only, and then it is gone.

Then I went up to the door of the house, and turned the handle very softly, and went in.

And the house was like a place deserted, yet was there a kind of order as if it might be used; and the tables were laid with victuals, and there was no lack of necessaries or of comforts;

And servants passed along the corridors; so I asked one of them, Where is the mistress of your house?

And he said, I know not.

Then I went on again, and passed softly through many rooms, and peeped into others;

And at last in a far chamber I came upon the figure of a woman, alone, and seated on a chair, with her head on her knees, and buried in her hands;

And I said, Are you the mistress of this house?

And when she lifted her face I saw it was very beautiful, and her eyes were glorious as the eyes of Love himself, but they were stained with weeping.

And she said, This is not my house, it is my prison.

And I said, Are not these servants here to minister to you?

She answered, Yes—but what is that if they are only here to minister to me?

But these rooms, I said, and well-set tables?

Yes—but what is that if they are only swept and garnished for me?

And this garden, and the fair outlook from it?

Yes—but since I may not even go my own errands beyond the gate?

And I said, How is that?

And she answered, Indeed I long to go down into the world, but I may not; no sooner do I show the face of Love than I am execrated as one forbidden and an outcast. For in this city so long as one remains within one's house one may do there what meanness and selfishness one will, provided one keeps fair the front of the house; but to go forth openly and share one's life and the gladness of life with others, that is not permitted.

And I said, It is a strange city.

And I went out and walked through the streets; but gloom and sadness reigned, and only in some houses the noise of feasting and debauchery, and in others a sound of weeping.

A Dream of Human Life

I DREAMED that I saw a wild and lonely promontory on which the sea beat; and the waves dashed against rocky cliffs and bastions, and flew in spray over the edges of them, and clouds drifted on overhead, mingling with the sea-mist below in one veil which wrapped and shadowed all, save where now and then a watery beam from the sun glanced through.

And in the midst among the rocks and crags was (it seemed to me) an ancient ancient fane, like some far forgotten Abbey Church built in an elder world—nor was it easy to say whether it was indeed built up of ordinary masonry, or whether by some rude art it had been shapen from the very crags themselves. But round about it and over the promontory on all sides the rocks and cliffs were carven in strange forms—sea-monsters half submerged beneath the waves, and serpents stretching along the bases of the cliffs, and evil shapes thrown up on land and grasping at the rocks with iron claws; and beside them forms heroic of men and women on ledges here and there and pinnacles, through the mist half-shown—as it might have been S. George against the dragon, or Andromeda to the rock-face chained, or Perseus with the Gorgon's head in hand.

But who they really were I could not well see. Only ever as the spray and wind wreathed by, the figures as in mortal combat seemed to move and menace each other, and serpents writhed and sea-beasts plunged through waves. And from the ancient fane came the sound of music continually—

now low and distant, now rising with the storm and mingling with the ocean-roar and wild cry of the wind: while overhead amid the breaking lights was a fluttering as of Wings.

And presently a change came over my dream; and looking again I saw that the storm had ceased, and the promontory was lying there in the sunshine, calm and peaceful; and the rocks were black no more, but full of color and glory; and the hero figures were in their places, at rest and beautiful to look on; and even the monsters that had seemed so terrible had a grace of their own, transformed in the peaceful light to harmless grotesque things. And the whole land seemed to thrill with a subterranean music, and on a high crag brooding over all was a figure with arms outstretched.

And once more my dream changed; and I looked, and the rocks had become like ordinary rocks and sea-cliffs, and grasses and wild flowers grew, and little habitations nestled, in the hollows of them; and the sea crawled about the boulders lying below them; and the promontory ran out into the ocean, and ships went past it to all parts of the world.

The Coast of Liguria

A THOUSAND years are nothing.

Once the Ligurian, sturdy and thickset, scaled these rocks,

And built his beehive huts of unhewn stone on the limestone terraces,

And gathered snails for food, and fought his tribal battles.

Now the Greek wanders along the shore, and oleander and rosemary

Shine in the moon for him, or Daphne hides

Among the laurel groves, or Heracles

Drives his red cattle home along the coast-line.

Later, the Roman makes great roads, and marches columns of soldiers through the dust,

Where overhead some temple of Castor and Pollux on the height

Gives omen of good fortune. The Christian follows,

Peacefully toiling in his olive-garden,

Hymning the gentle god,

And turns the Temple to a shrine of Michael—re-christens Mars, St. Martin.

But presently the Moor with fire and rapine sweeps the coast,

Or in his mountain-fastness, for a moment resting, watches the shining scimitar of the sea

Sheathed in the bay, its scabbard. Then, in their turn,

Bishops and Barons rule the land, and rage against each other. In the end the Modern

Buries it all in a big Hotel's foundations

Or the embankment of a Railroad.

Yet still beneath the surface all is alive.

Still the old peasant-woman—grin-faced, big-mouthed, with big-palmed hands, short fingers, and bandy climbing legs —among the rocks

Goes foraging for snails. The people still
Dimly athwart the mists of time remember,
Of Heracles the Savior,
How on this Plain, that Promontory, he rested
From his great labors in the West returning.
Still the little Church of St. Michael on the rock
Stands dearer to the folk for being pagan;
And still provençal songs and dances gladden the vintage;
And Moorish faces, and Greek, and old Phœnician,
Stir in the villages a stones-throw from the rail.

And still old names and festivals and customs
Linger along the coast and country side;
And still the hills stand, still the herbs diffuse
From the warm ground the old intoxication
Of aromatic sweetness. The waters still
Lap blue against the rocks. The snowy Alps
Look o'er the foot-hills and far out to sea,
To where and when perchance a worthier race
Than all that yet has been at length shall come
And gaze with grateful eyes upon their beauty,
And crown their slopes with gladness.

Easter Day on Mt. Mounier

(In the Alpes Maritimes)

SILENCE.—
Here on a rock in blue mid-air nine thousand feet,
The whole encircling sky flooded with light—the sun an unfaceable point in the dazzling zenith,

Warm, windless, basking—the snow at our feet a million bright points glittering;

And far around a multitudinous sea of peaks,

Frozen, of rock and ice, and fields of rounded whiteness,

And jutting shoulders, and slopes of shale, and walls,

Behind each other rising:

All drenched, dissolved, in light,

And waiting, silent, rapt, as if to break into song.

But not a sound.

Buried in invisible valleys—'mid pine and larch and torrent-beds below—

Villages ply their daily round of labor;

The peasant hacks deep the soil around his vine-roots, or with his long pole beats the boughs of olive;

Far by the sea, mid garden-terraces, hotels and villas, the great town keeps its carnival of Easter—

Unseen, unthought-of, here.

Here only rests the stillness of the Earth, waiting upon the glory of the Sun; or here and there in some calm lakelet imaged.

Ages fly by, and almost without change; dim lines of floating cloud just fringe the horizon; vistas of far lands, distant times, unfold;

And the silence of centuries holds the secret of history

Lost in the light of heaven.

At Mentone

WHY speak ye not, ye beautiful lands and seas,
Hung like a magic curtain in the light?
What dumbness holds you, O divine vast Earth?

Ye stretches of smooth bare rock, dotted with cactus and aloe,

Rising so bold in the sun, from your deep dark gorges below;

Ye pine woods on the mountain flanks;

And ye, ye terraces of endless labor, planted with vine and lemon and the abounding olive,

With peasant cots and cabins here and there, and cisterns where the frogs croak night and day;

Why speak ye not, why speak ye not?
Why with that strange prophetic glance of yours
Hang ye in heaven there, magic lands and seas,
Nor say the word we wait for?

The Campanile and red roof of the village church show out seaward against the sky-line; and the cypresses stand sentinel in the cemetery on the hill above;

The borage-flowers beneath the lemon branches catch the hues of sea and sky; runnels of water sparkle through the grass by the pathside; the scent of orange-bloom is in the air;

Far back into the valleys stretch the gray shade and gloom of the olive-yards; and the narrow tumbled alleys of the mountain-villages are like huge rock-burrows of human beings;

The grizzled wrinkled old man on his little plot of ground, and the young man beside him, work doggedly on with their mattocks through the heat of the day;

The broad-bosomed placid-eyed girl tends her flock of goats on the higher ledges.

Ye leafing fig-trees, like silver candelabra of green flame!

And ye, pink-blossoming peaches, dainty bright!

And ye, ye immemorial aromatic herbs and bushes—arbutus, myrtle, lavender, rosemary, thyme—trampled to perfume by the feet of long-forgotten races;

And thou, blue bay, with myriad points of light, and sky above with subtle answering quiver,

And high far crests of gleaming purple crag, and snows beyond,

Flaming, all flaming in the light!

Why speak ye not?

Cave men and women and children, on your sides by the sea-shore,

Your long skulls resting still in the palms of your bony hands,

A score millenniums lying in the same position—

Why wake and speak ye not?

Why utter not the thoughts that were, for you, the world?

Ye dead that build the rocks, and are the Earth, and fill, without a void, the crystal air!

And Thou one dead (for each and all of us)—one dead for whom our life we'ld gladly give—

[Thou whose remembrance passes through all sights and sounds, transforming and transforming them]—

Why through the veil of this material texture showest thou not, dear soul of things, thy face?

What dumbness holds you?

O divine vast Earth,

Why utterest not the voice we long to hear?

Monte Carlo

ALL the long afternoon in a cloudless sky, slowly towards its setting the sinking sun

Looks on a scene of wonderful beauty.

Deep below over the rocks, through luscious tangles of geranium and rose and heliotrope in flower, the sea sparkles a rich turquoise blue;

Palms mingle with mimosa and myrtle amid the gardens;

The little cape of Monaco stands out, a stone's-throw across the harbour—the mountains of Mentone run down to the sea—and overhead in the clear air rise (two thousand feet) the great frowning rocks of Turbia, with their ancient Roman tower.

In front of the Casino, on a gravelled space, dazzling in light, a throng of all nationalities—Germans, Russians, French, Italians, English, Americans—goes to and fro,

Or sits at the Café tables, sipping coffee and cognac and maraschino—

The puffy fussy Germans, the dull-eyed English, the feverish Russians and French.

The band, beneath its awning, plays; carriages drive up, and automatic cars with dusty occupants arrive; the new-comers alight and ascend the steps of the Casino; fashionable women are in evidence, some carrying long roulette-purses with chains;

Girls walk about singly or in pairs—pale, with carefully set profiles, lips, hair, and with immense hats and choice-colored costumes, orange-red or primrose or lavender or dead-white;

The knots, the groups, form and re-form; the waiters hurry to and fro; while in a corner with easel and palette an artist takes a sketch of the whole scene.

And still the sun nears its setting.

The air floats over, with the delicious scent of orange-blossom and mimosa from the gardens; the shadows form in blue folds on the distant mountains, the rocks overhead stand sturdier, more and more bastion-like, as though an earth-shock might tumble them on the crowd;

In the little harbour the wharf-men, with dusty sashes round their waists, are coaling a great white yacht, already half lost in shadow;

Along the shore in a green high-prowed boat some fishermen row and drop their seine net in the same old fashion of centuries;

The peasant climbs his terraces of olive, the goatherd looks down from his high perch among the rocks, and hears the faint strains of the band and catches the glance of the dresses.

And still the sun nears its setting.

And still, within, as all day since noon, the feverish crowd sits or stands round the tables;

Nigh twenty tables—well nigh a thousand people, for the most part bent on business—all but a few by the glitter dazed of the eyes of the great god Chance.

Hats doffed, a hush reigns; tiptoe they move about that huge saloon, as in some Temple.

And now the great shaded lamps are lighted, hanging close over the green cloth.

See! how beautiful is the face of this little old lady, with tiny shrunken body and trembling mittened hands—the deep eyes, and dark shades in the eye sockets, and pitiful tender mouth!

Each round she carefully places a gold piece on some compartment, and watches for the result—nor seems to doubt her occupation for a moment.

Next her a young girl of eighteen or nineteen, aristocratic-featured, sits intent, and hides her hot eyes and straight somewhat pinched mouth under the brim of a broad white hat.

Close by again, see, a woman in black, of clear frank simple-minded type, almost a rustic, standing behind a chair and trying one or two throws;

And here a man, faultlessly attired and with absurdly unconcerned manner, sitting close by a croupier, and every now and then changing a thousand-franc note for gold—which he dots about the board in the most casual way, and apparently with complete want of success;

And there, an old man with bald hot-veined forehead and

grey hair, deeply thinking, pencilling, computing, doubles his stakes with determination as he steadily loses.

Two demi-mondaines in waved and fretted hair, with long kid gloves covered with bracelets, push somewhat petulantly a little pile of gold across the board—then rake together their winnings and walk away.

There again, in the shade of many standing behind her, sits a strange Sibyll-like woman, with bat-wing trimmings in her hat. A half-formed smile dwells on her impassive face. She always wins, they say; and not a few furtively follow her lead in the chances.

Here is a young German student with old scars across his face; there, a Dundreary-whiskered yellow-haired Englishman of a type almost extinct at home; there, a business-like woman in mourning, with sharp nose and decided manner, evidently retrieving the fortunes of her family;

And there behind her an elderly respectable English matron, most anxious to speculate, but looking carefully round first to see if anyone recognises her;

And here again a big-chinned, flabby French youth with a suppressed boil on his neck.

Curious, the suppressed feverish sentiment of the whole scene, the quiet, the politeness; the occasional sharp glances, or hurried retirement from the table, the swift self-satisfactions, and the inward gnashings of teeth;

The many faces seamed with wrinkles spreading fan-shaped upwards from the bridge of the nose, or with twirled goat's-horn mustachios;

The little bald director on his high chair, white-skinned and white-haired, with big head, and quick beady eyes glancing through strong spectacles, watching closely the croupiers and the public ;

The detectives among the throng ;

The arrival at one of the tables of a roll of notes for a hundred thousand francs, to support the failing bank—the little stir of excitement among the gamblers, and the added stakes in consequence.

And now, outside, the sun has sunk.

Light-blue and white the calm sea lies beyond the palm-fronds, white sails speck the horizon, and the blue shadows on the silent hills are beautiful.

The fishermen have finished their haul, and stand chatting on the beach as they thumb from the meshes of the net and store in baskets the fish, which bring them a few pence for their day's labor, presently to be served up at fabulous prices in the restaurants.

The goatherds drive their goats homeward, with tinkling bells, and peering over the rocks look downward on the Eden which they may not enter.

The primitive peasant-woman, with great mouth and ears unlearned of aught so modern as French or Italian, returns to the arched streets of her hill-top village—Roccabruna or Eza or Turbia—and ere the glow of sunset dies from the sky is fast asleep.

But the lights of the Casino shine reflected in the water, and the strains of the band, through the scented air, vibrate ;

and from the gaming-tables the crowd drifts to its supper-tables —while late through the night the telegrams flash to Vienna or London or Paris.

India, the Wisdom-land

HERE also in India—wonderful, hidden—over thousands of miles,

Through thousands of miles of coco-nut groves, by the winding banks of immense rivers, over interminable areas of rice-fields,

On the great Ghauts and Himálayas, through vast jungles tenanted by wild beasts,

Under the cloudless glorious sky—the sun terrible in strength and beauty—the moon so keen and clear among the tree-tops,

In vast and populous cities, behind colors and creeds and sects and races and families,

Behind the interminable close-fitting layers of caste and custom,

Here also, hidden away, the secret, the divine knowledge.

Ages back, thousands of years lost in the dim past,

A race of seers over the northern mountains, with flocks and herds,

Into India, the Wisdom-land, descended;

The old men leading—not belated in the rear—

Eagle-eyed, gracious-eyed old men, with calm faces, resolute calm mouths,

Active, using their bodies with perfect command and power—retaining them to prolonged age, or laying them down in death at will.

These men, retiring rapt—also at will—in the vast open under the sun or stars,

Having circled and laid aside desire, having lifted and removed from themselves the clinging veils of thought and oblivion,

Saw, and became what they saw, the imperishable universe.

Within them, sun and moon and stars, within them past and future,

Interiors of objects and of thoughts revealed—one with all being—

Life past, death past—the calm and boundless sea

Of deep, of changeless incommunicable Joy.

And now to-day, under the close-fitting layers of caste and custom, hidden away,

The same seers, the same knowledge.

All these thousands of years the long tradition kept intact,

Handed down, the sacred lore, from one to another, carefully guarded;

Beneath the outer conventional shows, beneath all the bonds of creed and race, gliding like a stream which nothing can detain,

Dissolving in its own good time all bonds, all creeds,

The soul's true being—the cosmic vast emancipated life —Freedom, Equality—

The precious semen of Democracy.

1890.

Tanzbödeli

HIGH on a rock that juts above the Lauterbrunnen valley,

Seven thousand feet in air, a little floor of grass,

Even and smooth, with flowers—

The little dancing-ground, they call it (and have called, how many centuries?)—

And then across the gorge, and again some seven thousand feet higher,

In slopes of rock and ice, the Jungfrau towering over,

Proud and magnificent; and in her train seven mountains—

(Roth-thalhorn, Gletscherhorn, Ebne Fluh, Mittaghorn, Grosshorn, Breithorn and Tschingelhorn)—

Standing there like a wall and sending their glaciers to the valley.

[And far behind the wall, far miles and miles, but invisible from here,

Great rivers of ice between the glistening black and scarred crags

Flow, tossing and twisted, with sea-green escarpments and fissures, and scaly snaky moraines, and glittering snow-fields above them, sharp on the dark blue sky,

All stretching, far as the eye may see, in endless silence,

Save for the fitful rattle of falling rocks, or muffled roar of an avalanche.]

But at the end of the train, and closing it and the valley,
Rises a huge bare cliff, the frowning G'spaltenhorn,
Diabolic and dark, an inferno of crags and pinnacles.

This on one side; on the other the landscape opens
To lower valleys and pastures—the huts of Gimmelwald and Mürren,
Lying serene in the sunlight, with herds of cows just visible,
And the blue-vista'd gorge of Lauterbrunnen running down to the distant hills of the twin lakes,
And tiny villages and towns, half seen and half imagined,
All folded in light and glory—as the peaks above are folded.

And there below us, in the huts of the upper pastures, the herdsmen gather and milk the cows, and in their great cauldrons warm the milk, and strain and press the cheeses;
Staying a few weeks in one spot till the feed is exhausted, and then leading the tinkling-belled herd by precipitous paths to other huts and pastures,
All summer long, till the autumnal return to the lowlands;
And in the little chalets the daily life goes on, with knitting and spinning and beating of flax, and storage of winter fuel and fodder;
And men with small short scythes mow the slopes of

grass almost too steep to stand on, or carry their heavy wooden brantes of milk, braced to their shoulders, down the mountain-bases;

And for a brief season the stream of visitors arrives, and the hotels wake from sleep, and distant music is heard;

And guides and climbers sally forth with lanterns in the dark, and are glad if they may remain for a few minutes at early morning in the thin icy wind of some silent summit;

And even tiny invisible trains attempt to ascend the unimaginable mountains.

But here on this little palm of grass, Earth's hand uplifted,

All is the same as though the centuries moved not;

And the peaks stand round and wreathe themselves in clouds, and take the colors and the lights of morning and evening;

And the moon sails, and an occasional eagle, overhead;

And the valleys plunge below in depths and darks invisible;

And the butterflies and flowers quiver and leap in the light and living air;

And we, in our turn, on the little dancing-ground of centuries,

Forming a circle, dance—till the mountains too wheel round us.

A Village Church

A STUMP of oak—a huge old ruin of a tree, shored up with props;

And close beside it a vast and splendid Yew—still flourishing though fully a thousand years of age—

With congregated stems upstanding, straight as a gothic pillar, and mighty outspread arms on every side—a home for birds for countless generations;

And almost underneath the branches of the yew, sunk somewhat in the ground,

A tiny little Church—squat roof and belfry—with Saxon walling and low dark Norman doorway.

And evening falls, and to us sitting in the lane

From the low door as from some cavern-mouth of the Earth

Come sounds of old old chants and murmur of ancient prayers, and the wailing of responses,

Wafted—and a faint faint odor of incense (for High Church is the service),

And dimly seen, as through the mists of time, the glint of candles on the altar-table.

Voices indeed of Time and the Earth, like some strange incantation,

Issuing from the gloom beneath the Yew-tree,

Coming adown forgotten centuries—

Voices and echoes of ages of Christianity, borne onward with the sound of Norman and Saxon chisels:

Phrases that Chrysostom wrote, or good St. Basil; or borrowed from primitive liturgies of the earliest Christians;

Scraps of antiphonies sung within the Catacombs; tags, litanies and Kyrie Eleisons, adapted from pagan rituals;

Fragments of Creeds and Glorias from the days of Athanasius and the Councils; or sanctioned by the use of Sarum;

Gregorian chants, and quaint melodic strains from far Greek sources:

These blent together,
And laden with hopes and fears of hearts long buried,
Come issuing from the doorway.

And all the while under the evening sky
The landscape stretches, so fair, so calm, so actual,
And in the air the delicious waft of hawthorn-blossom
Floats, and the red June sunset hangs in the West,
And high in the branches of the Yew, a peacock,
Preening its feathers, sits.

How strange!

To think of the old old life for a thousand years that has gathered round these stones, and since the yew was a seedling planted,

Of the generations of men and women to whom the Church has been the centre of their days—their first and latest home;

The old clock striking the hours and the quarters through years and decades,

The old bell tolling its way through the centuries, with pendulum-swing of life-times;

The infants and wide-eyed children brought in for baptism; and after eighty years brought in again—mere broken husks of aged folk—for burial;

And their children the same, and theirs again the same, and theirs, and theirs;

Till at length by the font where the monk once muttered his Latin blessing, a smug young curate stands and lisps the service;

The marriages, the festivals, the long tradition of the mass and the holy communion from that last supper in Jerusalem;

The glow of religious adoration, and the pain of broken hearts, age after age; the hopes of Heaven, the nightmare doubts of Hell;

And the trio of Gods aloft, looking on all the time,
The Father, the Son, and the Ghost,
And the dear Mother Mary, a little aside, apart,
And the crowd of Saints in the background—
The council-chamber of heaven.

And the terrestrial councils held in the Church,

The conferences of the local Barons with the clergy, the visitations of Bishops,

The stormy scenes in the vestry, while the congregation is waiting in the pews;

The Folk-motes called in the Churchyard, the preparations for defence in time of civil war;

The fierce fights on occasions all round the building and amongst the tomb-stones; and up the stone stairs of the Tower—the monks and priests laying about them with heavy candlesticks.

To think of it all:

Of the images that have stood in those niches and been cast down and broken to shards;

And of the tapestries and altar-cloths that have been woven and stitched with pious care, and that have long since faded away—

And the little church still standing!

And still the old vague-toned Gregorian phrases wandering down, and still the golden voice of Chrysostom sounding from afar over the hubbub of the ages,

Floating on the waft of incense, and mingling with the breath of the hawthorn, this June night, 1900.

How wonderful!

The romance, the poetry, the heart-yearnings—

As once perhaps they gathered round some Greek Temple:

[Where the young man, having washed his body and offered a sacrifice before the laurel-crowned priest, poured out his heart in prayer to Apollo, touching the knees of the god with a leafy olive-wand;

Or the expectant mother came to Juno Lucina with a branch of palm in her hands;

Or the old man at midnight, with a propitiatory offering, to the shrine of Proserpine:]

So, all these centuries and round the village church,

A like romance has gathered.

And presently an alien folk will come, with alien thoughts and customs;

And this little shrine half-buried in the ground, with its candles and incense and stuffy dingy interior,

And its three Gods sitting up aloft, and its doubtful glances at Mary,

Will seem as far back and strange as anything Greek or Egyptian.

Thus as I dreamed, wandering away in thought through the long long past and future,

The service ended, and in the last glow of sunset

Out came a crowd of gaily-colored girls in silks and muslin, and village youths, and a top-hat squire or two—all modern as modern—

And knowing or recking nothing of Chrysostom and Basil:

Into the sweet evening air and dusk they came, with cheerful babble,

Discussing the local fashions or last event in politics;

When sudden a yell rang out in the sky, like the yell of a monstrous cat,

And with a great rush of wings, and to a chorus of exclamations,

The peacock flew from its tree overhead to the East and into the Night.

Sheffield

WHERE a spur of the moors runs forward into the great town,

And above the squalid bare steep streets, over a deserted quarry, the naked rock lifts itself into the light,

There, lifted above the smoke, I stood,

And below lay Sheffield.

The great wind blew over the world,

The great soft Southwest, making a clear light along the far horizon;

The sky overhead was serenest blue, and here and there a solitary white cloud scudded swiftly below it.

The great soft wind! How it blew in gusts as it would unroot the very rocks, eddying and whistling round the angles!

The great autumnal wind! bearing from the valley below clouds of paper and rubbish instead of dead leaves.

Yet the smoke still lay over Sheffield.

Sullenly it crawled and spread;

Round the bases of the tall chimneys, over the roofs of the houses, in waves—and the city was like a city of chimneys and spires rising out of a troubled sea—

From the windward side where the roads were shining wet with recent rain,

Right across the city, gathering, mounting, as it went,

To the Eastward side where it stood high like a wall, blotting the land beyond,

Sullenly it crawled and spread.

Dead leaden sound of forge-hammers,

Gaping mouths of chimneys,

Lumbering and rattling of huge drays through the streets,

Pallid faces moving to and fro in myriads,

The sun, so brilliant here, to those below like a red ball, just visible, hanging;

The drunkard reeling past; the file-cutter humped over his bench, with ceaseless skill of chisel and hammer cutting his hundred thousand file-teeth per day—lead-poison and paralysis slowly creeping through his frame;

The gaunt woman in the lens-grinding shop, preparing spectacle-glasses without end for the grindstone—in eager dumb mechanical haste, for her work is piecework;

Barefoot skin-diseased children picking the ash-heaps over, sallow hollow-cheeked young men, prematurely aged ones,

The attic, the miserable garret under the defective roof,

The mattress on the floor, the few coals in the corner,

White jets of steam, long ribbons of black smoke,

Furnaces glaring through the night, beams of lurid light thrown obliquely up through the smoke,

Nightworkers returning home wearied in the dismal dawn—

Ah! how long? how long?

And as I lifted my eyes, lo! across the great wearied throbbing city the far unblemished hills,

Hills of thick moss and heather,

Coming near in the clear light, in the recent rain yet shining.

And over them along the horizon moving, the gorgeous procession of shining clouds,

And beyond them, lo! in fancy, the sea and the shores of other lands,

And the great globe itself curving with its land and its sea and its clouds in supreme beauty among the stars.

A Lancashire Mill-hand

SHE died at the age of sixty-three, mother of a family of four children, and having during that time worked for fifty-three years in a Lancashire cotton-mill!

You know the scene: the great oblong ugly factory, in five or six tiers, all windows, alive with lights on a dark winter's morning, and again with the same lights in the evening; and all day within, the thump and scream of the machinery, and the thick smell of hot oil and cotton fluff, and the crowds of drab-faced drab-dressed men and women and children—the mill-hands—going to and fro or serving the machines;

And, outside, the sad smoke-laden sky, and rows of dingy streets, and waste tracks where no grass grows, and tall chimneys belching dirt, and the same same outlook for miles.

Here she had grown up a bright-eyed strenuous girl, to blushing maidenhood, and had become a young woman, and in time married; and here she lived, and bore her family, and died.

In those days—it happens even now—whole families, father, mother and children, would go out (locking up the house behind them) to work in the Mills; thus to earn perhaps a decent combined wage.

And in this instance it was so. But the mother worked hardest of all: her one idea—her blind religion—being work: to bring up her children to work—never to give in.

During the last twenty-four years of her life she never missed a single work-morning being at the mill at 6 a.m.

Even before that, on each occasion of her confinement, she would only allow herself three weeks off. When she returned to the mill she would leave the new-born babe every morning at the house of a nursing woman on the way.

The youngest-born—and he it was who told it all—said he remembered very well as a child being picked out of bed in the early dawn, wrapped in a shawl, and carried through the streets, just as he was, to the house of an old woman.

Here his mother would just pop him down, and hurry on to *work*.

At the last, after her half-century of toil, she was terribly broken with bronchitis. Often, after going out at 5.30 a.m. into the cutting winds of winter, the gas-lamps would reveal her leaning for a while, wheezing and coughing, in the shelter of a doorway to get her breath and strength.

Nevertheless she never missed a single day, or even a quarter.

She never gave in till the very last.

Then one day at dinner-time she came home and went to bed.

But at 9 p.m. the youngest son going up found her dressed!—"O yes, the house wanted tidying, and she would attend to it, as she was going to work in the morning, and there was no one else to do so!"

But in the morning there *was* someone else, and the house was tidied without her;

For she lay in her chamber, dead.

A Trade

IN a little stinking shop, hardly seven feet square—

Just one room in a London back street, where nearly every room lodges a family—

With two or three little paraffin stoves in, and bowls and pots horribly steaming, for dyeing gloves—

A man, some forty years old, burly and well-brained but broken down and bloated with drink, plying a trade.

"Do you see?" he says, "I buy these white evening kids, what have been cast off, from the slop-dealers, at so much a score. Then I gets a woman to mend 'em and put buttons on, and then I dyes 'em black, in these 'ere pots.

[As good as new, d'you see? See how they shine when they're got up—and the black'll never come orf.]

Then I goes out into the markets—Leather Lane and the street-markets I mean—and sells them at sixpence a pair.

[Yes, and I mean to get a stamp and stamp 'em inside; then they'll be *just* like new.]

O it aint so bad in mild weather, but when it's like this, cold and rainy, folk won't stop to buy nothing, they won't."

And there were the gloves, shriveled, black, and hanging in rows on stretched strings, like the corpses of weasels and moles strung by gamekeepers in the woods;

And there was the filthy suffocating odor of the den and the chemicals, and the intelligent eye of the man wavering in slavery to his protruding lower lip.

"Lor!" he said, "I often stay here at nights as well as days. I don't live with my wife now. She's a regular bad 'un!"

The Ploughboy

THE blackbirds sing so sweetly in the morning;

They are building a nest yonder in the hedgerow, where I pass at sunrise: and I think their song is sweeter then than else at any time of day.

I take care not to disturb them: they work as hard as anybody for their living.

And I think they know me now, they are that bold. But they do not follow in the furrow, like the wagtails and robins; they seem to hang to the grass-lands.

It is pleasant then, in the morning: the air is so sweet.

And the smell of the earth—and I like the warm smell of the horses.

Jeannie goes in the furrow, and Rob on the fallow: they go very steady;

And when the ground is soft-like, it's good enough going, but when it's stiff it stretches your arms a bit:

Lord! it does make you sweat!

The Jackdaw

CHORK! chork!

The white sea-cliff, the crawling waves, the fringe of weed between,

Midway a cleft in the rock—from above, from below, unseen.

Chork! chork!

The sun alone looks in where my nest is; the moon shines in the blinking eyes of my children.

Sweet is the warm night nestling all together, sweet the dawn by the fresh air fanned,

Sweet to arise and soar into the blue weather—to see the brown fields and pastures inland!

To sail inland, a dozen together, to the feeding grounds, and unearth the fat white slugs, (chork! chork!)

To roam and range with the others—how sweet!—and yet not with them,

Forgetting never

My own particular cleft in the rock and the tuft of sea-poppies beside it—like yellow flames burning—

And the red wide throats of my chicks as they catch my black shadow upon them, returning.

By the Mersey

I WATCHED the sunlight on the river Mersey—all glorious with sailing clouds and shadows—and sailing craft and steamers on the tide—a stirring sight!

And heard the clang and clamor of Liverpool behind me;

And saw in front the crowded ferry-boats crossing, and gulls in clusters swooping down for garbage;

[Two steps on the green water with webbed feet—and up again, their full beaks raised in air!]

And the great Atlantic liner lay at the landing-stage, towering up, a mighty wall of iron, full thirty feet, over the little people who rushed to and fro below, completing the last shipments and farewells.

For even now the gong sounded in the ship's interior; and all was ready—every rope in place;

The shrouds and stays were taut on mast and spar;

Two slender wires, Marconi's, at the stern, ran sloping down from mizen-truck to wheel-house,

Ready to catch (far out at sea) a faint thrill from the home-land.

The little tug's towing-cable strained too at the monster; but still four mighty hawsers held her fast;

And still she delayed to move, and still the folk, on ship and shore, with jokes and quips beguiled the hour of parting.

Then sudden rang a bugle from the deck. Down came blue peter; and the foghorn sounded.

The hawsers fell, and she was free. A moment more, magnificent, she glided down the river.

And instantly from all the decks (from some of the port-holes too) there burst a flutter of waving hands and scarves—a fringe of white, answered by such another fringe on shore;

And instantly I saw—what I had missed before—

[Stronger, it seemed, than even cable and hawser, more numerous and tense than shrouds and stays, finer and subtler than Marconi wires,]

A thousand invisible threads which bound the ship, and would not be cast off or loosed or snapt,

But tugged and strained at living human hearts—and strained and tugged and tore—

Till hearts were sore and broken:

Threads of some unseen world—that stretched and stretched, and floated like fair gossamers in the evening light—

So fine and strong, so stronger even than steel;

And followed lengthening as the great ship faded—lost in the glory of sunset—

Far out to the Atlantic.

In the British Museum Library

HOW lovely!

This vast vast dome—and the suspended sounds within it!

Sounds and echoes of the great city vibrating tirelessly night and day;

Voices and footfalls, of the little creatures that walk about its floor, half-lost in the huge concave;

Suspended whispers, from its walls, of far forgotten centuries.

How lovely!

All the myriad books—well-nigh two millions of volumes—the interminable iron galleries, the forty miles or so of closely-packed shelves;

The immense catalogue—itself a small library—of over a thousand volumes;

The thousands of editions of the Bible and parts of the Bible, with texts, commentaries, translations in every known tongue—these alone occupying sixteen volumes of catalogue;

The thousands of Shakespeare books, or of Aristotle, the hundreds of Homer, Virgil, Chaucer, Dante, Montaigne, Goethe, Voltaire, Byron;

The mountain-peaks of literature, and the myriads of lesser hills and shoulders and points—the mole-hills and grass-blades even;

The interminable discussions of the Schoolmen and Grammarians, the equally interminable discussions of modern

Science—the investigations into ghostly geometries of four or five dimensions, or into the values of c and g in the Lunar Theory, or into the alternation of generations in some obscure Annelids ;

How bewildering ! how impossible to sum up and estimate !

And then to think how slight it all is—
A little remnant of faded thought ;
A little dust just crumbled through the fingers, hardly more ;
The residue and deposit of ages ;

The dead leaves, the skeleton foliage, which generations of trees have cast upon the earth—and which with infinite care we sort and catalogue !

And then to leave the mouldy stuffy vault, and go out, and breathe freely,
How lovely !
One living bud upon a little branch,
One face that looks and passes in the street,
And these contain it all.

How lovely !

To think there are all these books—and one need not read them ;

To think of all the patient purblind accumulations, all the dry-as-dust, the fatuous drivel, the maundering vanity, the endless repetitions of vain things,

The endless care and industry and science used to sort out the pearls from the vast heap—

[And we only know they are pearls because we already have the same within ourselves—]

And to think we need not stop to count them.

What is it, such a library?

It is the homage of industrious dulness to the human soul.

[Once there lived a man—he actually thought and felt—he wrote even a single sentence of sense—he uttered a word from his heart.

Then all the nations said, "O if we may but attain to save this divine spark from oblivion, let us erect even such a labyrinthine monument as this."]

Come, come away!

The single hair of Buddha encased in a dágoba-mountain of brick and mortar grows now, even such a hair, upon thy loved one's head.

Come, come away! leave books, traditions, all the dross of centuries,

Clean, clean thy wings, and fly through other worlds.

Heaven's stars shine all around thee;

Deep in thy Heart the ageless celestial Museum

Waits its explorer. All that they said—those wise ones—

They say and repeat it now, where the plough-boy drives his furrow:

Be still, O Soul, and know that thou art God.

Empire

Blind, fooled, and staggering from her throne, I saw her fall,

Clutching at the gaud of Empire;

And wondering, round her, sons and daughter-nations stood—

What madness had possessed her.

But when they lifted her, the heart was dead,

Withered within the body, and all the veins

Were choked with yellow dirt.

O ENGLAND, fooled and blind,

Come look, if but a moment, on yourself!

See, through your streets—what should be living sap of your free blood—

These brutish squalid joyless drink-sodden populations flowing;

And in your mills and factories the weary faces, sad monotonous lives,

Or miles of cottage tenements with weakly red-eyed children, worn-out mothers.

See, from your offices and shops at closing hours, the morbid stream—as from unhealthy glands within the body—

Crowds issuing of anæmic youths and girls, pale, prematurely sexual,

With flabby minds and bodies (held together chiefly by their clothes) and perky pick-me-up manners;

See, on the land, where at least there should be courage and grit and sinew,

A thin-legged slouching apathetic population, ignorant even of agriculture,

And in the mines and coal-pits, instead of lusty power, poor rickety limbs and ill-built bodies;

And ask yourself the searching question straight,

How out of such roots shall a strong nation grow?

And then look upward, at the surface show and flaunt of society,

Those that are well-fed, and (out of the labor of the others) have plenty of chink in their pockets—

The club and drawing-room life—

Look well, look well, and see the feebleness and insincerity of it:

The scores and scores of thousands of titled and moneyed persons—a vast and ever-growing multitude—living the lives of idiots,

Faiblesse oblige their motto:

Of men scarce fit even to be good officers, much less good administrators; of women hardly worthy to be mothers;

A society wielding enormous wealth and privilege, skilled chiefly in the finesse of personal gain and advancement, and honeycombed by cynicism and unbelief:

And for the rest, the hundreds and hundreds of thousands swarming in commercial dens and exchanges,

The life of the successful business man, the company-promoter, the lawyer; the manufacturer, traveller, factor,

dealer, merchant, speculator; the bank, the counting-house, the big store, the director's office; the advertising agent, and the vendor of patent medicines;

Think of all these, and of the ideals beneath and behind them—and ask again the question,

How out of such stuff can a strong nation grow?

Where (and the question must be faced),

Where, anywhere over the surface of England to-day, do the necessary conditions exist for the outcrop of a decent population—if only a body of a few hundreds at a time?

Where are the conditions for the growth of men and women—

Healthy and well-formed of limb, self-reliant, enterprising, alert, skilled in the use of tools, able to cope with Nature in her moods, and with the Earth for their sustenance, loving and trustful of each other, united and invincible in silent faith?

Where is the Statesman who makes it the main item of his programme to produce such a population? Where the Capitalist, where the Landlord?

Where indeed—in a country in which Politics are but a game of party bluff, where Labor is a modified slavery, and where Land (for such purposes as indicated) is simply not to be had?

And the answer comes: The conditions do not exist.

The conditions (says the doctor) of life and vitality are gone—already the process of decay has set in, which only a swift crisis can arrest:

The heart is dying down,
Withering within the body; and the veins
Are choked with yellow dirt.

And this Thing cries for Empire.

This Thing from all her smoky cities and slums, her idiot clubs and drawing-rooms, and her brokers' dens,
Cries out to give her blessings to the world!
And even while she cries
Stand Ireland and India at her doors
In rags and famine.

These are her blessings of Empire!
Ireland (dear Sister-isle, so near at hand, so fertile, once so prosperous),
Rack-rented, drained, her wealth by absentees in London wasted, her people with deep curses emigrating;
India the same—her life-blood sucked—but worse:
Perhaps in twenty years five hundred millions sterling, from her famished myriads,
Taken to feed the luxury of Britain,
Taken, without return—
While Britain wonders with a pious pretence of innocence
Why famine follows the flag.

Last, but not least, insult is added to injury.
For, while she prates the blessings of her Empire, contempt and studied indifference are her methods of administering it:

LIBRARY

An empty House to hear the burden of the sorrows of India,

And Irish questions treated with derision.

O England, thou old hypocrite, thou sham, thou bully of weak nations whom thou wert called to aid,

Thy day of ruin surely is near at hand,

Save for one thing—which scarcely may be hoped for—

Save that a heart of grace within thee rise

And stay the greed of gold—which else must slay thee.

For now I see thee like a great old tree,

A Mother of the forest,

Prone on the ground and hollow to the core, with branches spread and stretched about the world.

And truly these thy seedlings scattered round

May spring and prosper, and even here and there

One of thy great arms elbowed in the earth,

Or severed from the trunk, may live again ;

But Thou—thy tale of ancient glory is told—

I fear thou canst but die.

And better so perhaps ; for what is good shall live.
The brotherhood of nations and of men
Comes on apace. New dreams of youth bestir
The ancient heart of the earth—fair dreams of love
And equal freedom for all folk and races.
The day is past for idle talk of Empire ;
And who would glory in dominating others—

Be it man or nation—he already has writ
His condemnation clear in all men's hearts.
'Tis better he should die.

The British, A.D. 1901

AS the light descends to drown and redeem the world,
And the sea quivers answering to its depths,
And the rocks and trees stand up in the blue air like transparent creatures,
And the wheeling pigeons are a part of it all,
So is Love among the children of men—
Without which they have no being.

For I seemed to see in vision a people that knew not Love,
With cold-mutton faces and cod-fish eyes hurrying around,
Intent on endless quests, and gathering wealth in high and low places, and picking over the scrap-heaps of the world,
And building up carefully their own good names and reputations,
And following up clues of knowledge and philanthropy, and feeding piously and punctually the lusts of their bodies.
And it was like half-blind folk in a dark place hurrying up and down,
Hurting against one another in lost and aimless confusion,
Weary and senseless, stupefied and without originality,
Because indeed the one thing that might make life rational and vital was absent.

And it seemed to me that the most ignorant unbred girl or boy amongst them, who loved another and worshiped in mortal form a divine creature,

Knew more and possessed more even than them all.

Portland

IN the grey North-East of winter the great granite rock, see, overhung with cloud!

And from the top no portion of the mainland visible—only a few war-ships below, and Chesil Bank, its far end rising into fog.

But behind, on the high plateau of the rock, among the quarries,

Where neither the sea nor the ships nor the mainland, but only the dreary piles of stone and drearier prison-walls, can at any time be descried, and the arméd sentinels—

There, behold! the convicts in gangs, ten or twelve to a gang—and to each gang one or two warders, with muskets—

The sullen heavy-faced convicts, and (in that place) every day more sullen growing—hauling at trollies, or quarrying or dressing the stone:

Damned,

Without interest in life.

And so onward, through more warders, some with and some without muskets,

And through huge stone gateways and bastions, and

through heavy clamped doors, with endless turning of keys;

Till at last amid all this absurd and lumbering display of brute force, as if for wild beasts—behind bars thick enough to confine an elephant—

Lo! a well-known face!

A gentle unharmful face, making the whole apparatus look foolish and ashamed of itself—

The face of your friend whom you came to see—
So tender and hesitating, thoughtful, and lover of children:
His face, also alas! grown monotone,
And like a caged wild animal's indeed,
With dull and quavering eyes, that fill with tears,
And lips whose tremulous smile belies the words
They speak so bravely.

And so more clanging of doors and turning of keys, and this one left behind again, clamped down,

And buried in stone and iron.

Damned,

Without interest in life:

Neither to speak nor to hear, to speed nor to welcome, a word of fellowship, a single act of kindness;

[Even a warder for tucking the scanty blanket round an ailing prisoner was fined;]

Never to use nor exercise the sense of helpfulness—the source of all human virtue;

Never to feed but only starve the soul;

Is this the Doom?

To hear no news from the outer world, save at unimaginable intervals a letter;

To read no book—save some goody-goody inhuman rubbish recommended by the Chaplain;

To nauseate, and yet to hunger ravenously for the same scant ever-same food;

To sicken at and hate the same insults and loud imperatives of the jailer, unendingly continued, unendingly borne—the same idiotic vacancy of the cell—

The three-legged stool, the can, the barred little window;

The same long hours of the night with pain at the heart, the sound of silly fingers every hour at the slide of the spy-hole, and the flashing of the night-officer's lantern in one's face;

The recurring effort of the irritated mind and starved body to compose themselves to sleep;

In vain: the same same thoughts thought over and over and over and over again;

The same little stock of memories and fancies brought with one into this whited sepulchre—getting smaller and slighter daily—now like a wheel with ever rapider motion going round and round,

Till the brain itself is reeling.

[And now a Fear, perhaps for the safety of some loved one outside, leaps into the grinning circle and courses with it; and now another, perhaps for one's own fate in the years still in front; and now—worst of all phantoms—the Dread that one's mind is giving way: till, in fact, out of momentary sleep awaking to the same awful nightmare, a chill runs down the

back, the body breaks in sweat, forms gibber and voices jabber—and presently the doctor is called.]

Mind starved and body starved, and heart, too, starved—
Is this the Doom of Man to his outcast fellow?

Only for those whose minds and hearts are already stunted—for the merely brutish by nature—the fate reserved is easier.

For them, two thoughts alone dominate—Hunger, the ever-present craving for food, the counting and computing of meals in prospect, sufficiently degrading;

And Sex, the everlasting curiosity and imagination (and act if possible);

But no word, no possibility presented to them, of Manhood; no word, no possibility, of Love.

And so for those who care not that such possibilities should be presented,

Is the easier fate reserved!

China, A.D. 1900

FAR in the interior of China,

Along low-lying plains and great river-valleys, and by lake-sides, and far away up into hilly and even mountainous regions,

Behold! an immense population, rooted in the land, rooted in the clan and the family,

The most productive and stable on the whole Earth.

A garden one might say—a land of rich and *recherché* crops, of rice and tea and silk and sugar and cotton and oranges;

Do you see it?—stretching away endlessly over river-lines and lakes, and the gentle undulations of the lowlands, and up the escarpments of the higher hills;

The innumerable patchwork of cultivation—the poignant verdure of the young rice; the sombre green of orange groves; the lines of tea-shrubs, well-hoed, and showing the bare earth beneath; the pollard mulberries; the plots of cotton and maize and wheat and yam and clover;

The little brown and green-tiled cottages with spreading recurved eaves, the clumps of feathery bamboo, or of sugar-canes;

The endless silver threads of irrigation-canals and ditches, skirting the hills for scores and hundreds of miles, tier above tier, and serpentining down to the lower slopes and plains—

The accumulated result, these, of centuries of ingenious industry, and of innumerable public and private benefactions, continued from age to age;

The grand canal of the Delta-plain extending, a thronged waterway, for six hundred miles, with sails of junks and bank-side villages innumerable;

The chain-pumps, worked by buffaloes or men, for throwing the water up slopes and hillsides, from tier to tier, from channel to channel;

The endless rills and cascades flowing down again, into pockets and hollows of verdure, and on fields of steep and plain;

The bits of rock and wild wood left here and there, with the angles of Buddhist temples projecting from among the trees;

The azalea and rhododendron bushes, and the wild deer and pheasants unharmed;

The sounds of music and the gong—the Sin-fa sung at eventide—and the air of contentment and peace pervading;

A garden you might call the land, for its wealth of crops and flowers,

A town almost for its population.

A population denser, on a large scale, than anywhere else on the earth—

Five or six acre holdings, elbowing each other, with lesser and larger, continuously over immense tracts, and running to plentiful market-centres;

A country of few roads, but of innumerable footpaths and waterways.

Here, rooted in the land, rooted in the family,

Each family clinging to its portion of ancestral earth, each offshoot of the family desiring nothing so much as to secure its own patrimonial field,

Each member of the family answerable primarily to the family-assembly for his misdeeds or defalcations,

All bound together in the common worship of ancestors, and in reverence for the past and its sanctioned beliefs and accumulated prejudices and superstitions;

With many ancient wise simple customs and ordinances,

coming down from remote centuries, and the time of Confucius,

This vast population abides—the most stable and the most productive in the world.

And Government touches it but lightly—can touch it but lightly.

With its few officials, its scanty taxation (about half-a-crown per head), and with the extensive administration of justice and affairs by the clan and the family—little scope is left for Government.

The great equalized mass-population pursues its even and accustomed way, nor pays attention to edicts and foreign treaties, unless these commend themselves independently;

Pays readier respect, in such matters, to the edicts and utterances of its literary men, and the deliberations of the Academy.

And religious theorizing touches it but lightly—can touch it but lightly.

Established on the bedrock of actual life, and on the living unity and community of present, past, and future generations,

Each man stands bound already, and by the most powerful ties, to the social body—nor needs the dreams and promises of heaven to reassure him.

And all are bound to the Earth.

Rendering back to it as a sacred duty every atom that the Earth supplies to them (not insensately sending it in sewers to the sea),

By the way of abject common sense they have sought the gates of Paradise—and to found on human soil their City Celestial!

And this is an outline of the nation which the Western nations would fain remodel on their own lines—

The pyramids standing on their own apexes wanting to overturn the pyramid which rests foursquare on its base!

But China remembers too well the time when it too endured the absurdities of monopolized Land and Capital, of private property in water and other necessaries, of glaring wealth and poverty, and the practical enslavement of one man by another;

It remembers even yet the discomfort of standing on its own apex,

And oddly enough has no intention of returning to those times.

Standing beyond Time,

As the Earth to the bodies of all men gives footing and free passage, yet draws them to itself with final overmastering force, and is their bodies—

So I their souls.

I am the ground of thy soul;

And I am that which draws thee unbeknown—veiled Eros, Visitor of thy long night-time;

And I that give thee form from ancient ages,

Thine own—yet in due time to return to Me

Standing beyond Time.

Who but the Lover should Know

AH! who but the lover at last should know what Death is?

To give one's body to the earth;

To rise through the roots of the trees and to feel once more the sunshine—floating as a leaf in air;

To star out months together with mosses and bog-plants on the lonely mountain-sides, to lurk under the speckled fungi in the woods, looking up at the traveller as he passes;

To be sucked in, in the mad rush of the sap through the veins of the chestnut in spring, and to burst in its great shining buds;

To catch at, dimly as in dreams, the wonderful thoughts that sweep through—the great rushing prophetic dreams of the life-laden earth;

To feel the call of existence in new and strange fashion—

To arise and ascend;

To mix with the animals roaming over the Earth;

To be and to include them—to put on purposely the mask which they put innocently on;

To be one of two swallows clinging to the southern wall, twittering, discussing sites for a nest; to be a snake basking coiled on a rock in the sun;

To rejoice in my swiftness and strength, my inevitable action and instinct;

To pass into the bodies of men and women, to be arrayed in their hair, and to look forth out of their eyes;

To be the long lines of habit in them, the food that is sweet in their mouths, the poison that is bitter;

To be the thoughts that they think, and the dreams that they dream; to circle very close;

To circle closer than all thought; to touch and startle—like the sound of distant music heard through the rushing of a storm;

To be the presentation of new unsuspected ideals—

To be buried in the ground;

To be buried deep in the ground of all existence;

To lie in the soil whence all human life springs, and whither it returns again;

Listening as in a dream of joy to the sound of innumerable voices,

And to the sound of innumerable footsteps coming nearer through all the ages;

To see and to be unseen; to hear and to be that which no ear hath heard;

To turn an open impartial eye without blame on every creature; to hold up a mirror,

So tallying nature that to it all men and things run to look upon themselves and learn their parts;

To give products and receive materials;

To have the adit, to be the hidden link, the life which does not appear;

To love without sorrow; and to send love forth to bathe the world, healing it from its wounds—

Ah! who at last but the lover should know what Death is?

The Everlasting Now

WHEN all life has been rich in experience shall not Death be rich in experience also?

Hold fast to the actual, and do not go outside good sense;

Do not let your mind stray into a world of negations and impossibilities, or try to image some future time when it will be unable to image anything—for there is no sense in that.

Do not wander too far into time at all, lest with the everlasting Now—the centre of all life and experience, and your own true lover—

You fail to keep your first appointment.

Now is the Accepted Time

AMID all the turmoil and the care—the worry, the fever, the anxiety,

The gloomy outlook, fears, forebodings,

The effort to keep up with the rush of supposed necessities, supposed duties,

The effort to catch the flying point of light, to reach the haven of Peace—always in the future—

Amid all, glides in the little word Now.

As when the winds of March with their long brooms sweep the dead leaves from the surface of the ground, and the Earth in virgin beauty with the growing grass once more appears;

So when all this debris of thought from the Past, of anxiety about the Morrow, is at last swept away,

Does the vast ever-Present beneath reveal its perfect rondure.

A Summer Day

SEEING once again the ethereal blue of the sky—the limpid air—the all-enfolding sunlight,

Here in the great tumultuous abounding city, or again in the far woods among the fallen oak-boles and the fox-gloves,

The far floating ever haunting shimmer of uncaught beauty:—

I recognise that in all and everywhere it is the same:

Somehow to hold and have this in oneself—

This light and everlasting space,

This real eternal, whence the sensible light and space are born—

Somehow to hold from all things still a little aloof for this;

No rock that stands above the river's edge—but that which illumines the rock;

No brown sail in the bay—but the sweet undirected air that wafts it;

No pleasure, but the greater which lets the pleasure go or come;

Not anything, but that which brings to all things grace and light.

Still the far clouds just rim the Western sky—domed masses clear above, below lost in the summer haze:

So vast the orb of heaven enfolds the earth—the rocks and seas and rivers—and the dream-walking millions of the earth;

So vast the soul of every man enfolds his mortal deeds and thoughts,

Deeds, thoughts, desires, confused and contrary, vexing each other and vexed, in myriads, every shade and color, form and tongue, strange wanderers,

Dream-walking, till at length the real day may dawn.

The Central Calm

DRAWING back for a moment from Time, and its superficial claims and conclusions,

Realising for a moment the artistic nature of the utterance of the Universe:

That all is for expression, and that for this end commencement and finale, first evolved and latest evolved, are equally important;

That Progress is a word which may be applied to any world-movement or individual career in the same sense as it may be applied to the performance of a musical work,

Which progresses to its final chord, yet the conclusion of the whole is not in the final chord, but in that which runs beneath and inspires the entire web—in that which from first to last the whole complex succession of chords and phrases indicates :

Realising this—

Realising—thus for a moment withdrawn—that there is no need to hurry, no need to dash against the bars ;

But that Time itself rushing on with amazing swiftness in its vast and endless round, with suns and systems, ages and geologic epochs, races and tribes of beings, mineral, vegetable, animal, and ethereal, circle beyond circle, infallibly fulfils and gives utterance to the glorious whole :

Like one in the calm that is the centre of a cyclone—guarded by the very tornado around—

Undisturbed, yet having access equally to every side,

I drink of the deep well of rest and joy,

And sit with all the gods in Paradise.

Widening Circles

THERE is no gap nor any flaw.

I establish my base of operations here, you establish yours in distant grounds, a million years back or a million years forward :

It makes no difference,

Our widening circles inevitably meet and interfuse some time.

When I Look upon Your Faces

CHILDREN, dear children, when I look upon your faces,
Lo! all the hidden griefs, the sorrows and the vain imaginings,
The longings, and the desperate struggles and hatreds,
The jealousies, angers—and the sudden joys, breaking the heart's doors open—
Pass in dumb show before me.
Like figures in a dream I see them there gesticulating—behind a veil, in silence.

And still you move to your daily ways and works, seeming so unconcerned—as I to mine—
And still the waves of Time wash down between us,
And soon shall wash even you and all your dreams
Into the void—and mine.

But even so, dear children, I forebode
Deliverance;
Some better thing than all our dreams and longings:
One Life—and all these images in their strange procession,
Its mystic intimation.

Life Behind Life

WHAT joys, what strange joys, lurk behind the actual!
See how great the pleasures of the body, of eating,

drinking, resting; or of the mind, of knowledge, ambition, power;

And yet behind these what strange pleasures:

Pleasures of fierce pain endured, pleasures of the body exposed to bullet-wounds, scourges, fire—shattered and cast away;

Pleasures of pleasure refused, of simple withdrawnness and indifference, or of mastery and ascendancy.

Ever breaking out behind the actual some unknown force or being,

Throwing the whilom body off like a husk, with its former capacities and needs,

Creating new joys, fiercer wilder than those of old.

The Stupid old Body

DO not pay too much attention to the stupid old Body.

When you have trained it, made it healthy, beautiful, and your willing servant,

Why, do not then reverse the order and become its slave and attendant.

[The dog must follow its master—not the master the dog.]

Remember that if you walk away from it and leave it behind, it will have to follow you—it will grow by following, by continually reaching up to you.

Incredibly beautiful it will become, and suffused by a kind of intelligence.

But if you turn and wait upon it—and its mouth and its belly and its sex-wants and all its little ape-tricks—preparing and dishing up pleasures and satisfactions for these,

Why, then instead of the body becoming like you, you will become like the body—

Incredibly stupid and unformed—going back in the path of evolution—you too with fish-mouth and toad-belly, and imprisoned in your own members, as it were an Ariel in a blundering Caliban.

Therefore quite lightly and decisively at each turning point in the path leave your body a little behind—

With its hungers and sleeps, and funny little needs and vanities—paying no attention to them;

Slipping out at least a few steps in advance, till it catch you up again,

Absolutely determined not to be finally bound or weighted down by it,

Or fossilized into one set form—

Which alone after all is Death.

The Wandering Lunatic Mind

DO not pay too much attention to the wandering lunatic Mind.

When you have trained it, informed it, made it clear, decisive, and your flexible instrument and tool,

Why, do not then reverse the order and become the mere

fatuous attendant and exhibitor of its acrobatic feats (like a keeper who shows off a monkey).

Remember that if you walk away from it, leaving it as dead, paying it no attention whatever—it will have to follow you—it will grow by following, by reaching up to you, from the known to the unknown, continually;

It will become at last the rainbow-tinted garment and shining interpreter of Yourself, and incredibly beautiful.

But if you turn and wait always upon it, and its idiotic cares and anxieties, and endless dream-chains of argument and imagination—

Feeding them and the microbe-swarms of thought continually, wasting upon them your life-force;

Why, then, instead of your Mind becoming your true companion and interpreter, it will develop antics and a St. Vitus' dance of its own, and the form of a wandering lunatic,

Incredibly tangle-haired and diseased and unclean,

In whose features you, in sadness and in vain, will search for your own image—terrified lest you find it not, and terrified too lest you find it.

Therefore quite decisively, day by day and at every juncture, leave your Mind for a time in silence and abeyance;

With its tyrannous thoughts and demands, and funny little fears and fancies—the long legacy of ages of animal evolution;

Slipping out and going your own way into the Unseen—feeling with your feet if necessary through the darkness—till some day it may follow you;

Absolutely determined not to be bound by any of its conclusions; or fossilized in any pattern that it may invent;

For this were to give up your kingdom, and bow down your neck to Death.

As a Mould for some Fair Form

AS a mould for some fair form is made of plaster, and then when it is made and the form is cast therein, the plaster is broken and flung aside—

So, and for a form fairer than aught thou canst imagine, thy body, thy intellect, thy pursuits and accomplishments, and all that thou dost now call thyself,

Are the mould which in time will have to be broken and flung aside.

Their outlines are the inverse of thy true form: looking on them thou beholdest—what thou art not.

Nothing Less than All

ALL, all—and nothing less than all.

Ever men say: Here lies the truth, There lies the truth —Take this, cast that aside—Throw in thy lot with us—We are the wise, the rest are fools.

But I am as one dumb—I try to speak, to say what is in my mind, but words fail me.

I go with these wise folk a little way, and then I draw back again; I throw in my lot with them, and then alas! I throw in with the fools.

I stultify myself, and am like a thing of no shape.

The fault is mine, that I cannot say what I want to say —I cannot for the life of me answer the questions that are continually being asked.

Is it for pleasure and the world and the present, or for death and translation and spirituality, that we must live? Is it for asceticism and control, or for ingenuity and sweet enjoyment?

Does the truth lie with the East or with the West—with Buddhists and the followers of Lao Tsze, or with those who span seas and rivers by bridges and wing aerial flights by machinery?

Is it best to be an idler or a worker, an accepted person or a criminal?

Shall the town be my home, with its rush of interests and sympathies, its fascinations and magnetisms of the crowded pavements?

Or the country, with its gracious solitude and the pure breath and beauty of the air and the fields?

Shall I give my life (how gladly!) to my one, my only lover—absorbed, we two, our days, in single devotion to each other—

Or shall I pour it out upon a hundred and a thousand beautiful forms (so beautiful) to spread from them as in an ever-widening ring to others?

Which is the most desirable or useful trade—to be a musician, or a geologist, or a navvy? to work laughing and joking with one's mates in a big workshop, or to walk at the

plough-tail all day in the quiet landscape under the slow changes of the weather and the clouds?

To be a mathematician tracking in one's study the hidden properties of curves and closed figures, or an astronomer noting the star-transits on which a nation's time-reckoning depends?

To be a file-forger with hooved palm sweating before one's fire in summer, or a cobbler cursing the brittleness of his wax in winter?

Or a potter or a moulder or a parson or a prostitute or a town-councillor?

Is it better to be surly and rude, or sympathetic and suave, to be quick-tempered or patient, hot-blooded or cold-blooded, 'cute or simple, moral or immoral?

To join the society for the suppression of Vice, or to be one of the persons to be suppress? to be partial to drink, or to be a teetotaler?

For the life of me I cannot answer all these questions—I acknowledge that I am a fool.

Sometimes with this inability to take sides comes a strange terror of losing all outline, of losing my identity, my proper consciousness, everything;

Till I think of the Present and the work I have actually to do—and then comes relief;

Then instantly everything is decided—one's place, and the part one has to play—nor is there any doubt whatever about the next move.

For the moment I am pledged to this or that;
Yet I feel that in the end I must accept all,
And shall be content with nothing less than all.

Believe Yourself a Whole

BELIEVE yourself a Whole.

These needs, these desires, these faculties—

This of eating and drinking, the great pleasure of food, the need of sex-converse and of renewal in and from the bodies of others;

The faculty of sight, the wonderful panorama of the visible, and of hearing;

The inquisitive roaming brain, the love of society and good fellowship;

The joy of contest, the yearnings of Religion, the mystic impulses of night, of Nature, of solitude;

All these and a thousand other impulses, capacities, determinations, are indeed Yourself—the output and evidence and delineation of Yourself.

They cannot (in any permanent sense) be peeled off and thrown away;

They spring inevitably deep down out of yourself—and will recur again wherever you are.

There is no creature in the whole range of Being from the highest to the lowest which does not exhibit these and similar capacities, or the germs of them, in itself.

You are that Whole which Nature also is—and yet you are that Whole in your own peculiar way.

Were your eyes destroyed, still the faculty of sight were not destroyed:

Out of the same roots again as before would the optic apparatus spring.

Should you die of starvation you would only begin immediately after death to take food in another way; and the impulse of union which is at the base of sex lies so deep down that the first reawakening of consciousness would restore it.

Believe yourself a Whole, indivisible, indefeasible—

Reawakening ever under these, under those, conditions—

Expanding thus far, expanding less far, expanding farther;

Expanding this side, expanding that side, expanding all sides;

Ever diverse yet the same, the same yet diverse—inexhaustibly continuous with the rest;

And made for love—to embrace all, to be united ultimately with all.

The Body Within the Body

WHEN life like a ghastly panorama stretches before the eye of the spirit—

A festal procession, as it were, continually gulfing itself in a quicksand;

When—waking as in a nightmare at dead of night—

One thinks of all the disease, the weariness, the suffering of the world as it is—

Of the cancer eating slowly onward with its roots entwined in the vitals—the vista of agony and defeat by the curséd thing;

Of the incurable filth, the venom in the lungs, breeding slime and death within one through the interminable months;

And these but samples of what waits, more or less, for almost all;

When one thinks of the sudden senseless accidents which are for ever occurring—the ship returning home, full, with brimming hearts, from the Antipodes, ripped on a rock and gone in a moment to the bottom;

A lurch, somewhere, of the shrinking earth-strata, and a whole city tumbled in shrieks and ruin;

The 'weight' coming on in the coal-pit, the ominous fall of small stones from the roof, the awful cracking of the great oak-props, the hurried rush of the miners and their swifter still entombment;

The breaking of a cable, or of a driving band in machinery, a flaw in a wheel, a random step on a stairway—and husband torn from wife, and mother from child, or child from mother;

Death and destruction and the messengers of death and destruction in myriad forms still waiting to fulfil the inevitable doom;

When, I say, the necessity arises to face all this—and face it out—

Then somehow, underneath it all,

I seem to see that the strands of affection and love,

auroral, shooting from one to another—so tender, so true, and life-long,

And longer than life—holding together the present and past generations;

The currents of love and thought streaming in the watches of the night from far and near, from one to another,

(Streaming all the more powerfully for the very hindrances and disasters which arrive or threaten,)

And building in the bustle of the day such likeness of their dreams as may be—

That these inner are after all more real in some sense than the outer things—that they surpass in actual vitality and significance even all this artillery of horrors.

I dream that these are the fibres and nerves of a body that lies within the outer body of society—

A network, an innumerable vast interlocked ramification, slowly being built up—all dear lovers and friends, all families, groups, all peoples, nations, all times, all worlds perhaps—

Of which the outer similitudes and shells, like the minute cells of an organism, are shed and die in endless multitudes with continual decay and corruption;

But the real individuals persist and are members of a Body, archetypal, eterne,

Glorious, the centre and perfection of life and organisation,

And the source of all the Light in the universe.

In an Old Quarry

ONCE in an old quarry,
In a heathery nook among the rocks, unclothed as I reclined in the sun, facing only the great hills and the sky;
Millions of years floating softly down through the aerial blue,
Thy words—millions millions of human forms—
I saw descending.

Tiny, into the tissue of grass and tree and herb passing—into the mouths and bodies of men and animals—and here and there a fitting home in the sex-cells finding,
At length, clothed mortal men and women,
Out on the actual world I saw them step:
Thy words—thy wandering words—each one alone, so lost, so meaningless,
Each seeking his true mates, if so to spell
One sentence of thy great world-wisdom out.

The Soul to the Body

NOW at last after thousands of years, dear Body, from thy prison emerging,
Thy agelong tomb and sepulchre,
[Where, with what swathing-bands, like Lazarus, what mummy-cloths, what cerements of fashion custom ignorance, thou wast bound,]
Strange chrysalis, thy dead sheath bursting!

Strange glorious Lover!

To feel again thy arms enfolding, to breathe the fragrance of thy sun-kist skin, how sweet!

What long estrangement, dear, what nightmare has it been, divided us?

From far away what long slow exodus?

Why to the tomb in ages past didst thou descend—of Death and dread Corruption?—

While I, poor ghost, went wandering belated, and homeless and forlorn about the world?

For, as the delicate vein-winged gnat from its watery case, as Eve from Adam's side, as Psyche from the dark embrace of Eros,

So from thee gliding, far-back, long ago—dimly I mind me now—

Slow-differenced, this wondering wandering Self was I.

[Dimly I mind the agelong alienation:

Thou body, of thy mate bereft, and falling unclean, diseased, by devils possest, in mire and filth—

Blind Maenad by thy own senses led astray!

While I, poor soul, half formed and maimed of half,

Abstract, absurd, amazed, and crucified,

To arid and unending toils was doomed, and loneliness.]

After it all to thee, dear, to return,

To feel again thy close-enfolding arms—how sweet!

To know Thee now at last—(long veiled and hidden)—

Through Nature moving, as the Sun and Moon
Move through the crystal heaven, self-sent, divine,
Transparent, tameless, more than spirit or matter;
Dear body, brushing with thy feet the grasses, or resting outlined by the rocks and sea—
To rest with thee, content, in perfect union,
O in such deep and fathomless joy to rest beside thee,
Thy mate and friend, stricken with doubts no more.

Now once more in thy lungs the winds of heaven—as out there in the forest-branches—nestle;
The waters flowing in the brooks flow on in crimson tide through artery and vein; and lift the little valve-doors and pass by with whispered secrets from the clouds and hills.
Sweet now the food-fruits pass without corruption inward and outward of the body's frame;
Clean is the ark and holy chamber of the woman, the seed-vessel of the man;
And clean the body all suffused with passion
Till the right mate arrives.

O Love, with fragrance of whose wine the world is vanquished!
Great Ocean swaying far from atom to atom! sweet aromatic transpiration of the clods!
Diffused vast Life, now here, now there, in definite lightning-flash thy visible work fulfilling!
For this, even for thy habitation, hast thou prepared these bodies.

And thou, little one, so soon to dissolve into earth and air and sea,

Thy form, my love, I accept—and am no more divided from thee.

To Become a Creator

I HEARD a Voice saying:

See now in the end you shall stand Lord of the World.

When those desires which are injurious to others have departed from you—when all desires born of hate;

When you have become strong to conquer the world, strong to endure and conquer so the hatred and the injuriousness of others;

When what you will, you will with the whole force of your nature, undivided,

Undivided by fear, conscience, conventions, and the distinctions of self and not-self;

Then, lo! all that you wish—all that your heart forms for an image of its longings—shall take shape before you;

You shall create the things which are the fulfilment of your needs;

There is nothing that shall not be yours.

For this world you see around—these trees, mountains, these high city streets and the myriad faces that pass among them—are not all these but images?

Images, to the Heart of which with restless longing you have indeed so often sought to penetrate.

Say then, if you attain to be ruler of your own thoughts, and of the images which spring from your heart, is it so much that you should be arbiter also of these others, and touch to the Heart they spring from?

For deep down there is, may-be, no difference—

And when the desires that are born of Hate and Fear and Distrust are gone, there is no difference.

And I said: Am I not my own thoughts, and when these die, shall I not also die?

And the Voice said: Look again—

These thoughts, these images, that pass before you—they pass before You.

Then how can they be Yourself?

Nevertheless it is true that they proceed from you.

They proceed from the Heart, and the mind perceives them.

And so it shall be eternally.

And all This, and all that you see, and all that you think, and all that you experience, is the evidence of Yourself,

Yourself coming to you over the ages.

Therefore go forth—and be in truth thine own Creator—

No longer in fear and trembling but in kingship and power meeting the mystery of the world;

By the pure and beautiful desires which spring within

thee, like fountain-waters from a hillside welling (which flow and grow into an endless stream running ever towards the centre of the Earth)—by these guided,

Take with unerring choice, and make and mould, and carve and cut and force thy way—

To the centre of all creation—to the Heart indeed of all lovers.

After Fifty Years

LOOKING back now, after fifty years and more, when the main work of life is done,

When its acquisitions, its results, its alliances, are before me, and but few new elements remain to be added,

I ask myself: What is the gist, what the end, what the gain of it all?

What shall I take with me now when Death comes—as one coming homeward takes a flower in his hand for a token that he has strayed in gracious fields?

Is it applause and fame? But this, if it came to me, were only as a little stir of wind might be, to one seeking his lover in the night: a pleasant breeze—that yet might blow his lamp out!

Is it all the pleasure of life that I have had—in the beautiful woods and on the mountains, in the sun and in the waters, in social life and jollity, in my actual work?

Yea, these things were beautiful, but I have passed and left them and can return no more. The fields remain, but the flowers I plucked there are fading already on my bosom.

Is it all my acquisitions—of goods, of skill, of knowledge, of character—but what are they for myself but weariness, save I can yield them to the hands of one I love?

O little heart, where my friends my dear ones live, thou alone remainest!

While I live thou livest, and while thou livest they live, whose home is within thy walls.

Methinks that when I die I still shall hold Thee;

Methinks that when the world fades my little heart shall grow,

And grow and grow into another World,

And be my Paradise where I shall find

My lovers, and they me, for evermore.

Out of the House of Childhood

TO take by leaving, to hold by letting go.

Now, when out of the house of your childhood you are departing,

Where you suffered, where you joyed, in the old confused childish way, not certainly distinguishing things,

Now suddenly, as you leave, how it all becomes clear, as in a kind of new and incomparable light!

This is the corner where your little bed stood against the wall, this the window where the moon peeped, and the white and ghostly dawn came;

These are the closed rooms and chests into which you

were so seldom permitted to look; this was the daily routine of life which for some inscrutable reason was so rigidly adhered to;

These are the stairs where up and down moved such queer processions—funerals and weddings, and bustling visitors and elderly aunts and uncles, and the parson and the doctor in their turn;

And you were bade stand aside since you could not understand—

But now you understand it all.

Now, leaving it all,

The window truly for you will never stand open again, nor the sweet night-air through it blow—never again for you on the little coverlet of your bed will the moonlight fall;

And yet mayhap for the first time will the wind really blow and the moonlight fall,

For the first time shall you really see the face of your father whom you used to meet so often on the stairs.

All the spaces and corners of the house, and the swinging of the doors, and the tones and voices of those behind them, shall be full of meanings which were hidden from you while you dwelt among them.

Nor shall they ever leave you.

Never so long as yourself lasts shall you forget your mother smoothing out the pillow under your head, last thing at night, and kissing you as you slept;

Nay, every year so long as you live shall you understand

that act better—shall you come closer in reality to her whom as a child you saw but through a glass darkly.

Leaving and again leaving, and ever leaving go of the surfaces of objects,

So taking the heart of them with us,

This is the law.

The beauty of a certain scene in Nature,

The beauty, the incomparable beauty of the face and presence of the loved one;

The sweetness of pleasure — of food, of music, of exercise, or of rest and sleep;

All these are good to obtain and to hold;

Yet (when the need arises) to be able to dispense with them—that is indeed to hold and to realise them even more deeply.

When at last Death comes, then all of Life shall be to us as the house of our childhood—

For the first time we shall really possess it.

But who is ready to die to life now, he even now possesses it.

Little Brook without a Name

LITTLE brook without a name, that hast been my companion so many years;

Hardly more than a yard wide, yet scampering down

through the fields, so bright so pure, from the moorland a mile away;—

The willows hang over thee, and the alders and hazels; and the oak and the ash dip their feet in thy waves;

And on thy sunny banks in Spring the first primroses peep, and celandines, and the wild hyacinths lavish fragrance on the breeze—

Little brook, so simple so unassuming—and yet how many things love thee!

Here where I have my nest,

[And the white-throat through the day and through the long night sits patient on her brood among the grasses,]

Lo! Sun and Moon look down and glass themselves in thy waters,

[In the faithful watchful eyes of the bird they lovingly glass themselves;]

And the wren creeps like a mouse from twig to twig, and utters her thin sweet note; and the willow-warbler chimes his endless cadence of gratitude; and the night-jar sweeps silently by in the dusk, and the pheasant at midday comes down from the wood to drink;

And the trout balances itself hour-long against the stream, watching for its prey; or retires under a stone to rest;

And the water-rats nibble off the willow leaves and carry them below the wave to their nests—or sit on a dry stone to trim their whiskers;

And the little mouse, the water-shrew, walks (even like

Jesus Christ) upon the flood, paddling quickly over the surface with its half-webbed feet;

And the may-fly practises for the millionth time the miracle of the resurrection, floating up an ungainly grub from the mud below, and in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye (even from the jaws of the baffled trout) emerging, an aerial fairy with pearl-green wings;

And the caddis-fly from its quaint disguise likewise emerges;

And the bee, as ever, hums, and the butterfly floats, and the little winged beauty with shining mail of crimson and blue —the ruby-tail—searches in and out of every crevice and chink for a suitable place for her eggs;

And the early daffodil and narcissus from the garden stray forward to peer into thy mirror; and the wild garlic in the shade, and in the sun the king-cups, fringe thy margin;

And the prick-eared earth-people, the rabbits, in the stillness of early morning play beside thee undisturbed, while the level sunbeams yet grope through the dewy grass;

And the land-rail cranes its neck, to peer and peep from its cover;

And the weasel canters by on its quest, and the loose-jointed fox returning from a foray;

And the squirrel on a tree-root—its tail stretched far behind—leans forward to kiss thee,

Little brook,

For so many things love thee.

Say, what indeed art Thou—that hast been my companion now these twenty years?

Thou, with thy gracious retinue of summer, and thy fringes and lace-work of frost in winter, and icy tassels bobbing in the stream;

And sound of human voices from thy bosom all the day, and mystic song at night beneath the stars—

What art Thou, say!

While I have sat here, lo! thou hast scampered away, little brook, with all thy lace-work and tassels,

Three hundred and fifty thousand miles;

So quiet, so soft—and no one knew what a traveller thou wert;

Three hundred and fifty thousand miles in these few years, and so thou hast flowed for centuries;

And all the birds and fish and little quadrupeds have gone with thee, and herbs and flowers;

Yet I sit here and prate as though I knew all about thee—

And the country-folk too, who reckon thou camest to turn the Mill—they think they know all about thee.

But now I see how, soft-footed, thou passest by on a secret quest,

Cantering quietly down through the grasses,

And gatherest even from all wide earth and heaven thy waters together—to lave these turfy banks and the roots of the primroses;

I see how thou sheddest refreshment and life on thousands of creatures—who ask no questions;

Nor disdainest even to give the old millwheel a turn as thou goest, or bring me a tiny thought or two from thy store in cloudland,

Little brook, so strange, so mystical,

That all things love—though they know not what thy Name is.

I see where thou passest graciously by, and hastenest seaward,

Scattering once more thy waters to earth and heaven;

And I pray thee take again these thoughts thou hast brought me,

And bear away on thy bosom, and scatter them likewise.

1902.

Lo! what a World I Create

LO! what a world I create for my own, my lovers.

As the moonbeams in winter gliding along the forest-glades reveal the beauty of the trees—the hushed soft masses of light and darkness, the mysterious depths, the thousand fairy outlines—all merged and blent in one serene Presence;

As a figure dimly seen, from glade to glade, from perspective to perspective, through the wilderness wanders content—his soul with the forest-soul mated;

So dear friends, dear lovers, through this world of mine that I weave for you here, methinks sometimes I see you moving.

And I wait of you that in time you also spread worlds equally beautiful, more beautiful, for me,

[Not in written words only, but in spoken words, or the mere sound of the voice or look of the face, and in beauties of body and limb and brain and heart, and in beauty of deed and action, and in a thousand ways,]

Forest-glades and glooms where I in turn (as indeed already) may dwell and dream and be content, mated to the soul thereof.

Thus, dear ones, building up these spheres of ourselves continually for the joyance of each other, it shall come about that at length

We shall need no other world, no other worlds.

THE END

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